DISSENT

THE WORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS

New Problems for the Unions, *Frank Marquart* • The Miners: Men Without Work, *Harvey Swados* • Automation: a Challenge to the American Labor Movement, *Everett M. Kassalow* • Porkchopper Passage, *David Carper* • The Racket-Ridden Longshoremen, *Daniel Bell* • Hospital Workers Knock at the Door, *Dan Wakefield* • Hoffa and the Underworld, *Paul Jacobs* • The UAW: Limitations of Unionism, *B. J. Widick* • Little Labor: the Forgotten Unions, *Sidney Lens* • The Hard Road to Union Democracy, *Hugh Cleland* • New Theater and the Unions, *Paul Goodman*

AUTUMN 1959 75c

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AMONG OURSELVES

We should like to discuss candidly a problem with our readers.

Unlike the steel industry, DISSENT has been holding the line on prices. We have not raised the price of the magazine for the past five years, and we remain determined that, if at all possible, we shall not do so in the near future. At the same time, all of our costs have been steadily going up, and at a faster pace than our income. One need hardly be a professional economist to see that this creates difficulties.

We are *not* making any special appeal for funds (though it would be very helpful if the few persons whose pledges from last year's regular fund drive remain outstanding, would honor them soon). We have tried scrupulously to limit our appeals to readers.

But the truth is that we do need help, and help of a kind that does not really impose any great burdens upon you.

The most important and stable source of income for us comes from subscriptions. This yields a more reliable return than any sort of casual sales. If in the coming few months there could be a modest increase in the number of subscriptions, our problem would be alleviated, if not solved.

This means that it matters a great deal to us if:

a) you renew your sub *promptly*, thus saving cost and trouble of reminders;

b) you take a two-year sub, which means a savings for both you and us;

c) think occasionally of asking a friend to *subscribe*, check to be sure that your library carries the magazine, etc.

It is c) that is perhaps most important right now. We know that there are many people who read the magazine, buy it or pick it up casually—and who, if they were informed how important to our survival their subscribing was, would be glad to do so. Our friends throughout the country need to become just a little more "business" or "organization" conscious. Get a subscription! Make sure old ones are renewed! When a magazine can't afford expenditures for promotion, it is just these little things that keep it alive.

We earnestly hope you won't regard this as a routine exhortation. If there is a DISSENT discussion group in your city, please take this up at its next meeting. In some cities we have "agents" who regularly check on expired subs—and the results are remarkably good.

●

We've begun to make plans for the usual discussions, conferences, etc., in New York City and elsewhere; readers in the local areas will be informed. We'd be very glad to hear from the various DISSENT groups what they are planning to do. Often arrangements can be made to share expenses for speakers when we know what's going on.

●

The next issue will feature a section on "Intellectuals—East and West," with a variety of articles and documents. The outstanding item will be an English translation of a long document by a Russian writer on literary life in his country, which seems to us one of the most valuable things of its kind to appear in many years. We are also planning sections on the underdeveloped countries, the new face of Communism, and changing moods among youth—for the next few sections. Probably, there'll also be next time some comment on co-existence, summits, visits.

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DISSENT

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NEW THEATER AND THE UNIONS

Paul Goodman

I want to discuss a mistaken policy of certain theater craft-unions, and suggest a remedy. The matter has an importance in itself, because in recent years there has been a growth in new theater "off Broadway" that may, if it is encouraged, come to some real living theater. The union policy has been a discouragement—almost as bad as the unavailability of real-estate—and it has been attacked with the usual jeering debater's points by the tribe unsympathetic to unionism as such. But especially I want to discuss this question because it is, *in parvo*, a remarkably apt case of what is becoming the chief problem of our contemporary culture: how to live and breathe creatively in a society whose technology and organizations unavoidably make for conformity.

Without mentioning names, let me tell the story concretely in a case where I happen to know the facts. Here is a company devoted to new theater that has now for nearly ten years kept at work under arduous conditions, in larger or smaller quarters as it could get or build them by their own and their friends' voluntary labor. The nucleus of the company is a group of theater-people, actors, musicians, dancers, and writers—some of them of great reputation—who have all of them, for from ten to fifty years, given themselves, often financially unrewarded, to the development of our modern art. They are a constellation comparable, for example, to the fine group that cooperated as the Provincetown Players. Nobody would question that they are devoted to the growth of theater and not to making money; they try to make enough to sustain themselv

Now in casting their productions, they want to employ Equity actors. Many of those who voluntarily built the place they now occupy are Equity actors, and naturally, having laid the bricks, they want to act. By and large, professional actors belong to Equity and most of the best actors are professional, so you want to cast them. Now the situation among actors is as follows: (1) About 95% are chronically unemployed. (2) Actors have a kind of hunger, a need, to act. (3) Understanding this, Equity permits its members to work, in certain circumstances, for as little as $40 a week, regarding this figure, I guess, as pretty near the decent subsistence-minimum that a person must have, no matter what his enthusiasm or other satisfaction in the work. When, then, this company sends out a casting-call in the professional journals, there are hundreds of responses from actors eager for any part, hoping to advance their careers by appearing and getting notices, and many of them glad to work in a cultured non-commercial atmosphere on intrinsically more interesting material, where they can learn something. That is, small non-commercial theaters of high standards, and trained professional actors, are mutually useful to one another; and Equity recognizes this obvious fact.

The professional theater, however, is organized also on the principle that Equity players may not act in a non-union play, a play whose staff is not union. In my opinion this principle is a correct one (for reasons I shall briefly mention in a moment). But unfortunately it works out as follows: When the director of the company goes to the various craft and staff-unions to get a counter-signature to allow Equity players to play, he is told that he must

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THE WORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS

A Word of Introduction

This issue of DISSENT discusses the present condition of the American unions. There are general articles on new problems facing the labor movement and studies of individual unions focused on particular problems: democracy in the steel union, racketeering in longshore, etc. No pretense is made to completeness, and certain omissions—labor's role in politics, recent "labor reform" legislation—are obvious. But there is surely enough here for thought and discussion.

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A major shift in attitude toward unions has occurred among American intellectuals, including many of liberal and left-wing opinion. Unions are no longer regarded with warmth, let alone a sense of identification. Like so many other institutions in our society, unions are looked upon as a distant, impersonal *they*—an attitude that is, apparently, often shared by union members themselves.

If, a few decades ago, American intellectuals often deluded themselves by contriving an image of the American worker as a potential revolutionary, today they are inclined to accept an equally false image of him as someone whose socio-economic problems have been solved and who is joining the universal scramble for material luxuries. Partly this is the result of a new insularity, a decay of human sympathies among intellectuals who have lost a large portion of their critical response to society. People who feel obliged to "keep up" with Beckett and Jaspers feel no shame at being utterly ignorant about automobile workers. The "myth of the happy worker," as Harvey Swados once called it, has become part of the unexamined stock in the minds of people who in other respects are highly skeptical of the current cliches of our culture. In university dining-rooms one can often hear intelligent men repeating facile notions about Big Business vs. Big Labor—as if the steel workers, individually or together, are on the same plane of power and possession as U.S. Steel! In the city of New York, the country's commercial and cultural center, tens of thousands of Negroes and Puerto Ricans labor for shamefully low wages. Does anyone care? anyone but *some* unions try to improve their conditions of work and life?

It may therefore be that the most useful articles in this issue are those providing simple facts—Lens on the troubles of small unions, Widick on life in an auto plant, Swados on the bleakness of the coal towns. If nothing else, these should shock some people into an awareness of half-hidden realities.

Much is wrong with the unions, as writers like Marquart, Jacobs and

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others point out in the following pages; but without the unions, the life of the workers would be far, far worse than it is. And, for that matter, so would the life of many of the rest of us. As A. H. Raskin soberly reminds us in a recent article:

> The unions remain the only consistent voice in American society agitating for higher minimum wages, a comprehensive Federal health program, increased government outlays for housing, education, aid to depressed areas, and many other measures that go beyond the bread and butter of their own members.

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But, of course, the unions are also responsible for the dimming and tarnishing of their public image. To notice that all too many union leaders, living high off the hog, regard their unions as a kind of private possession, a benevolent barony; that there has been a drying up and sometimes a brutal destruction of inner democracy; that few unions retain the kind of devoted militants who were largely responsible for the creation of the CIO; that shamefully little has been done, in this era of prosperity, to organize or help the lowest-paid workers in the country, such as the textile and migratory farm workers; in short that the unions, instead of resisting the decline of consciousness and idealism which has afflicted our society these past few decades, have all too readily submitted themselves to it—to notice such things is not to become an enemy of labor. It is to acknowledge hard facts.

Racketeering is, in a sense, the least of it. A certain amount of petty conniving probably infests many unions, as it infests many segments of business. Some unions, such as the teamsters, seem to have more than their share of gangsters, and the same can be said for a fringe of the business world. Such facts are alarming, but not necessarily decisive. For racketeering is merely a gross sympton of a deeper illness, and it is the illness, not the sympton, that matters most. The illness is nothing less than a pervasive moral crisis in the labor movement.

In one way or another, this is the underlying theme of every article in this issue. Each writer keeps returning to the fact that there is an uncertainty of purpose, a loss of vitality, a sapping of morale even in the best American unions—and the contrast implied is not to some abstract model proposed by socialists, but to the recent past of many unions themselves.

That the unions are not morally worse (usually better) than the business world with which they deal, seems true—but a pitiable defense, since it hardly then allows union leaders to present themselves as paladins of justice and defenders of the underdog. That it is hard for unions to avoid the corner-cutting, crudely materialistic ethic of the corporations, is equally true—but a sad lapse into a vulgar sort of social determinism. That the unions share their uncertainties with the rest of us, is also true—but this merely leaves all the more open to criticism their failure to engage in honest reflection, their effort to get by on a mixture of improvisation and bravado, and most important of all, their indifference to the need for educating union members to the problems ahead.

Unions have every reason to fight on bread and butter issues; it would be a pity if any more of them suc-

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cumbed to the rhetoric of "social service" or "community responsibility." A criticism to be made of some unions is not that they are too narrowly concerned with material needs of their members, but that, in the complacency of the post-war years, they have not been concerned enough. But in our modern society, for the unions adequately to look after the material needs of their members, they must be able, in the long run, to see beyond the limitations of bargaining in their own industries.

The heart of the matter is reached in the last paragraphs of Frank Marquart's article, where he writes that while the survival of unions *per se* seems beyond doubt, the future of *a labor movement* is an open question. In this sense, the problem of the unions is but a reflection of a general problem in our society: have we truly reached a point of stasis, where there is no longer much need for social idealism and moral striving?

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Most unions and their leaders have recently functioned on the assumption of social stability, indeed, almost on the assumption of social changelessness. They may not say this, but they have behaved as if momentarily advantageous bargaining positions were now built into the society, as if they had no real task but to float along on the drift of history.

For a time, some can. It is easier for the building trade unions to do this than for the UAW or the textile workers. But for the union movement as a whole it can only mean an insidious inner stagnation, a creeping dry rot. And when problems like recession, regional depressions, automation, structural changes in industry do arise, the unions are not prepared. The leaders have not thought, the ranks have not been educated. Naturally, the assumption that all is well leads to quiescence and apathy in the membership. Comes a crisis, and this apathy can't be erased overnight. Then, suddenly panicked, union members demand the impossible, for they have not been educated as to the inherent and *growing* limitations of unionism in our society; they have been allowed to suppose that the unions can do almost anything. And they can't.

At the moment, for example, the membership of the industrial unions is being reduced by automation. Something can be done in traditional union terms: a program for large-scale worker retraining, for example. But the larger problem doesn't lend itself to simple trade union action. Nor do the problems raised by our recurrent recessions. Nor the political problems, with labor winning repeated "victories" at the polls only to see them turn into repeated drubbings in Congress.

Consider two instances: Recently the garment unions, disturbed by competition from low-wage countries, have urged the reinstitution of tariff barriers. And two UAW officials pleaded last spring for a continued high level of war production to be channelled to Michigan in order to provide jobs. Anyone who can imagine the pressures coming from the members of these unions, will not merely denounce them. Still, is protectionism any answer to the economic difficulties of the twentieth century world? Is the continued maintenance of war production the way to preserve jobs? What would the UAW do if peace broke out? Is this the best we can

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expect from some of the more progressive unions in the United States?

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The pressure of events may now force such a growth. For the post-war harmony between business and the unions, always precarious, now appears to be reaching an end. Qualified commentators agree that the steel strike is the result of a decision by the industry to beat back the union's power and regain for itself, as Raskin writes, "the primacy of the boss in all aspects of wage determination and internal plant management, thus restoring more or less the conditions that existed before the New Deal." The employers, adds Raskin, "have clearly determined to make their stand at this time, no matter what the costs in strikes or future ill-will may be." And we learn from union friends that similar hardenings of attitude are noticeable in other industries.

Apparently the leaders of American business, hard-headed chaps that they are, still find more truth in the theory of class struggle than the leaders of American unionism. But that speculation apart, there are other and more pragmatic motives for the business offensive. The unions have been partially discredited in the public eye—another instance of how bread and butter issues are affected by social and moral questions. Automation is eating away at the more progressive industrial unions. And now, for a complex of social and psychological reasons, the possible relaxation of the Cold War abroad may spark a renewal of class conflict at home.

So the unions will again have to fight, in a decidedly hostile atmosphere, and under increasingly perplexing circumstances.

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Under increasingly perplexing circumstances, because the range of problems facing them extends from those which liberals are accustomed to relegating to "the past" (union-busting, repressive legislation, etc.) to those which anticipate a possible society of tomorrow (changes in the composition of the labor force, new modes of work, etc.) The range of problems, that is, extends from those which most readily lend themselves to analysis in "class" terms to those which are best understood in relation to the growth of a "mass" society. The first kind of problem requires militancy, the second intelligence. Best of all would be a combination of the two.

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Running through most of the articles in this issue is a concern with the status of democracy in the unions. Traditional modes of direct participation are disappearing; old gadflys, especially from the left, are becoming scarce; intense interest among the members is, at best, sporadic; impersonal styles of bureaucratic procedure take over. No easy remedy is available, and there is a danger of supposing that it is all merely the fault of "labor bureaucrats." Such a notion is too simple. The drying up of democracy in the unions, as elsewhere, reflects major changes in our society: it reflects the appearance of a new kind of worker, radically different from the worker of a few decades ago; the general trend toward dissociation from social movements and institutions; and much more.

Paul Jacobs, in his article on Hoffa, warns that democracy is no cure-all: even if freedom were established in

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NEW PROBLEMS FOR THE UNIONS

Frank Marquart

At the outset a word should be said about the present climate of opinion in relation to trade unions. It has become the fashion, not only among reactionaries but also among liberals, to deprecate "big labor" along with "big business" and "big government." Many professional people, white-collar workers and even union members generalize far too glibly from the findings of the McClellan Committee. Though the vast majority of the unions have neither been called before this committee nor implicated by its findings, the impression is widely held that labor leaders are mostly power-hungry crooks. The head-fixing instruments of America's mass media have thereby helped create an image of organized labor as a sinister monopoly and threat.

Anyone writing critically or honestly about the unions runs the risk of seeming to encourage these misconceptions. Yet the fact that there *does* exist a crisis in the American labor movement makes imperative an honest evaluation of recent developments, in which one tries to avoid being influenced by the illogic of anti-unionism or the publicity of the labor officials.

The present crisis of the American labor movement results from factors such as these:

- the impact of automation
- the decentralization of factory operations in mass production industries
- the changing composition of the labor force
- the "pockets of permanent depression" in Michigan, Kentucky and other areas
- the eventual collapse of organization drives not only in the South but also in northern industrial regions
- the impact of economic cycles on collective bargaining innovations
- and the loss of elan and idealism in the ranks.

Some of these problems are discussed in other articles in this issue and so I shall pass them by. Some require more space than I have. A few I shall comment on.

First, a word about the nature of American unionism. However much they may differ in their rhetoric, the leaders of both "business unionism" and "social unionism" proceed from the premise that what John Dewey called "boss-bossed relationships" are inherent in

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industrial civilization. The horizon of the trade unions does not extend beyond this assumption; the improvements it gains occur within a job-oriented framework. It is as if a social order in which the job interest remains central is regarded as the highest stage of social development to which mankind can aspire.

Since the basic function of any union is bargaining over the job terms of its members, it must at all times consider the fluctuations of the labor market. An ideal condition for any union leader would be one in which the industry under his jurisdiction expanded faster than the available supply of workers, thus creating a sellers' market for the commodity he deals in—labor power. In this respect craft unions have a strong advantage over industrial unions, since crafts, by fixing the ratio of apprentices to journeymen, can exercise some control over the labor supply. This is seldom possible in mass production industries, where an oversupply of labor often serves to brake collective bargaining gains. Business unionists are candid when they bluntly admit that "our union is in business to sell labor." Social unionists employ more sophisticated rhetoric by relating the goals of their union to "national interests." But to understand the role of a union one must go beyond rhetoric; one must examine the structure of the industry in which the union functions, the market for the industry's products, and the industry's long-range profitability on invested capital.

What the union can achieve for its members will be determined largely by this complex of factors. And the way in which unions differ from one another reflects the differences in the industries in which they operate. Recently A. H. Raskin contrasted the United Steel Workers of America with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union by comparing what had happened to prices and wages in steel and the women's clothing since World War II. While steel prices rose four times as fast as living costs, there was practically no rise in the price of women's clothing. And while the average steel wage when Raskin wrote was 86 cents above the level of factory earnings as a whole, the average in the women's dress industry was 47 cents below the factory level.

Why this difference? The garment union operates in an industry so competitive that one-fifth of the companies go out of business annually. The steel industry is dominated by an oligopoly of three powerful companies, which account for 55 per cent of the country's steel output. In the garment industry three-fourths of the shops have fewer than fifty workers. The major steel mills employ from 5,000 to 15,000 workers. Changes of consumer preferences frequently upset price ranges in the garment industry; administered prices almost free the steel industry from concern with competitive market conditions. New technology in steel increases productivity, so that fewer workers can turn out a given volume of production. But in the garment industry employment fluctuates so violently that, like the Red Queen in Wonderland, the union must run faster and faster to remain in the same place.

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Yet both industries have one thing in common—and so do both unions. In garment, as in steel, the employer is in business to maximize profits on invested capital. And to secure the best possible bargain for their members on hours, wages and working conditions is the common denominator of all unions. In this sense, then, trade unionism contains the seeds of both conflict and cooperation. Though unions battle the employer for better conditions, they also have a stake in the employer's business and in his market—at least as long as they accept the *status quo.* (And to some extent any union which wishes to service the immediate needs of its members, no matter what ideology its leaders profess, must function within the limits of the *status quo.*) The nature and structure of a union are in part shaped by the kind of market in which it operates, so that where firms are predominantly small, the union may even be forced to act as a stabilizing force.*

By their very nature unions participate in the management control system. The instrument by which this happens is the union-management *agreement*—which should not be confused with the *contract.* The contract is a document formally institutionalizing the mechanisms (grievance procedure, etc.) by which the agreement is worked out in daily practice. The agreement is a dynamic process by which over the years the employer and the union arrive at a great number of major and minor decisions affecting the job. The agreement is the tacit system of adjusting labor-management relations around the job and in response to the pulls and pushes of a changing economic situation.

If, then, we wish to understand the significant trends in American unionism, we must begin with the problems basic to the pattern of agreement. It will be my thesis that collective bargaining is becoming ever more institutionalized and removed from effective control or participation by rank-and-file union members; that in the course of defending and improving the conditions of their members, the unions tend to become more conservative in outlook and bureaucratized in structure; that in the process of adjusting to the management control system, unions, especially those in mass production industries, find themselves pursuing policies which, often unintentionally, help perpetuate what industrial sociologists call the "dehumanization of the work process."

Collective Bargaining Trends

Let me now comment briefly on certain new and important collective bargaining developments which exert a stabilizing influence

* "Alex Rose, president of the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union, reported yesterday that the union had spent more than $6,000,000 to help the headwear industry recover from the recession. . . . Of this amount, he said, $1,000,000 consisted of direct aid to business. . . . The direct aid to business . . . included numerous loans to concerns in New York, Chicago, Baltimore and Massachusetts. . . . In addition to the loans and investments, the union spent more than $3,500,000 to block rent increases to millinery manufacturers in New York, which would have forced relocations and dispersal of the industry. It purchased two buildings in the garment district and is renting the space to millinery makers 'at moderate rentals.'" (*New York Times,* June 1, 1959)

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on the management control systems of both management and the national unions.

• *Long-term contracts.* In 1948 only 25 per cent of the union contracts surveyed by the Bureau of National Affairs ran for two or more years; by 1957 long-term contracts amounted to 81 per cent. Especially when business expectations seem bright, long-term contracts appeal more to employers than to unions, partly because management sees in them an aid to stabilizing their labor relations.*

Most union leaders also view long-term contracts as a stabilizing factor. They feel that frequent contract negotiations consume too much time and interrupt important administrative duties, such as servicing locals, organizing political action, etc. Moreover top-level union officials have developed a growing distaste for the aggravations that inevitably arise during negotiations. They dislike, especially, the opposition from articulate minorities at local union ratification meetings who take a dim view of some provisions in the new contract.

• *Fringe benefits.* Hand-in-hand with the long-term contracts go fringe benefits or "the package" which the employer must give as the union's price for the long-term contract. These fringes come in the form of deferred payments: wage cost-of-living escalators, improvement factors, pensions, supplemental unemployment benefits, etc. I think it safe to say that the deferred wage payment pattern, according to which pace-setters in an industry agree to raise wages annually in various forms for periods ranging over three or more years, amounts to a major post-war innovation.

When some of the fringe benefits—especially the escalator clause and the improvement factor—were first embodied in contracts of large unions, many writers accepted at face value the unions' claim that the improvement factor is the means by which workers receive their fair share of the fruits of technological innovations and higher productivity. But management viewed the improvement factor from another perspective, namely, as a plan of cooperation to improve output. One analyst, Jack Steiber, believes that management would not be willing to give up the improvement factor *even if the union requested it to do so.* "The provision is believed [by management] to have 'intangible' or 'moral' value, especially in disputes over technological changes and their effects on job rates." Disputes over job rates are often disputes over speedup. For it is the firm conviction of many workers, at least in the mass production industries, that, in return for economic gains on the fringes, they are constantly being forced to work harder. Here, for example, is an auto worker writing in his union paper about the speedup:

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* "The term 'stability' crops up again and again in personal interviews conducted with industrial relations directors. . . . Stability is used most often as a synonym for 'labor peace' . . . Coupled with the search for stability is the desire for predictability of labor costs and an opportunity to plan ahead on investment, production, expansion, and other areas depending upon reasonably stable union-management relations." ("Evaluation of Long-Term Contracts," by Jack Steiber, in *New Dimensions of Collective Bargaining,* edited by Davey, Kaltenborn, and Ruttenberg.)

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> As far as the old timers are concerned, our union made its greatest mark and achieved the deep respect of the membership in the old days by the aggressive fight on in-plant problems and especially speed-up. In recent years the emphasis has shifted to economic questions and often to the detriment of conditions within the plants . . . we have paid for the economic gains, at least in part, with the deterioration of conditions within the shops. [*Voice of Local 212,* UAW, June 1959.]

The intensity with which the steel workers recently responded to a similar problem—an intensity that could not be evoked by wage problems—shows that for many American workers their conditions of work, far from being an abstraction dreamed up by sociologists, constitute a major problem.

• *Pattern bargaining.* Another new dimension in collective bargaining is pattern bargaining, which also entangles the unions unavoidably in the management control system. It is an elementary principle in labor relations that a union must adjust to the profitability of the industry with which it deals. In an industry dominated by small, highly competitive firms, the union becomes a stabilizing force, helping the employers to form associations for the purpose of setting standards of production, prices and wages. Wages and working conditions are negotiated through multi-employer bargaining. But in an industry such as auto, dominated by a few corporations, the union engages in pattern bargaining. The "pattern" signifies the changes in wages and fringes negotiated by the union with one of the large companies. Then when dealing with smaller companies the union adjusts the pattern according to the financial position of the firms. In pattern bargaining the union must take into account past relations with the company; possible alternative job opportunities for workers who would be displaced if the plant should close; the value of seniority and other accumulated benefits which depend on the continued business of the company; the extent to which management inefficiencies contribute to the firm's financial difficulties; the concessions the union would have to make in order to give the company a reasonable chance to recover.

> During the entire 1946–53 period, approximately 40 per cent of the contracts negotiated with firms having fewer than 500 employees were below the pattern; in 1955 the figure was 70 per cent. The reason of course is that the union is not concerned about the indirect effects of below-pattern agreements on the general standards of the industry. In these units, therefore, the dominant consideration was the individual firm's financial condition, and the union normally was quite willing to make substantial concessions upon a clear showing of financial difficulty. [*Pattern Bargaining by the United Automobile Workers,* by Harold M. Levinson.]

Nor is below-pattern bargaining confined to small firms. In recent years some of the larger auto firms were faced with financial crisis, due to unfavorable competitive conditions. When this happened to Studebaker, the UAW negotiated below-pattern agreements, although the company was not thereby saved from financial disaster. In addition to accepting below-pattern wage rates and fringe benefits, the union has another way of adjusting to the needs of large auto concerns facing a

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crisis. With Chrysler the UAW has made "efficiency adjustments" to exact more physical effort from the workers. These take various forms, including raising production standards, reducing time allowances for wash-up, rest periods, personal needs, etc. Clearly adjustments of this kind permit flexibility in holding down labor costs, while the contract itself reflects a pattern agreement.

A study of pattern bargaining developments throws some light on the way in which centralized control is exercised by national unions. For obvious reasons, "efficiency adjustments" which lead to speedup are not popular with the men in the shop. Why then doesn't the national union's officialdom fear political repercussions from the workers affected by such adjustments? The answer to this question tells us something about the gap between international officials and the workers, and also about the nature of political manipulation in a union. After an agreement embodying efficiency adjustments has been negotiated, it must be "sold" to the workers at a membership meeting. The leader of the negotiating team who asks the membership to accept the agreement may find himself in an unpopular position; but thanks to the union's structure, he is not dependent for his job on the votes in the bargaining unit to which the agreement applies. His political support is drawn from a region of the union or he is on the international staff, dependent on the top leaders. Consequently he can afford to take an unpopular stand without fearing reprisals at the next election. One observer puts this matter with realistic precision:

> The tenure of a local union official may hang by a thread but when he becomes an international representative, he has arrived (unless the international union is badly factionalized). International union executives tend to have unlimited tenure except in the case of a major debacle. . . . Employers and economists generally consider international officers to be more reasonable and responsible than local officers. This is variously attributed to their maturity, greater experience, and better knowledge of the industry. Actually the most important reason is that they are better insulated from rank and file pressure. Democracy in the union, like competition in the product market, is universally the object of reverence but is not especially enjoyable to those who must reckon with it. [Arthur M. Ross, *Trade Union Wage Policy*, University of California Press, 1953.]

Structural Changes

As collective bargaining changes in character, so too does the structure of the unions. The unions of the future, it begins to seem, will be multi-industrial in that they will exercise jurisdiction over a growing number of occupational groups—a change as great if not yet as dramatic in union structure as the turn to industrial unionism a few decades ago.

Over the past two decades narrow-based craft unions have taken on broader structural forms. And during the same period industrial unions have been forced to allow within their structure greater craft autonomy. Amalgamations of related crafts take place when mechanization of craft operations and inter-craft mobility require an extension of jurisdiction to cover the newly-created jobs. And more craft auton-

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omy is granted by industrial unions because of problems resulting from the discrepancy between wage rates in captive and jobbing shops. The increasing ratio of skilled to unskilled workers in mass production industries gives the skilled workers more bargaining power; hence unions like UAW are forced to grant direct craft representation in all negotiations.

"Industrial unionism" in the sense we have known it since the 1930s is thus being displaced by multi-industrial expansion. This multi-industrial expansion will become accelerated by product innovations—new raw materials, new manufacturing processes and new gadgets —which tend to upset jurisdictional boundaries. Also promoting multi-industry unionism are strategic alliances, such as the one between the Teamsters and retail and service industries.*

The Work Process

It seems likely then that in the period ahead unions will become fewer in number, much larger, and multi-structured; they will be "general" in that they will have jurisdiction over heterogeneous occupations; and they will of course be highly centralized. How, one might ask, will all this affect the worker in relation to his job? For the worker this question is paramount, since, by the very fact of his being a worker, he will be forced to spend a good part of his life on the job. In his book, *Toward a Democratic Work Process,* Professor Fred H. Blum asks: "Will the union succeed in overcoming the limitations of its present operations . . . and become a vital instrument in the life of the workers by relating them to a community of work and labor, or will it become more and more an agency helping to administer an organization of work which . . . impedes a creative self-expression of the workers?"

Blum's question points to the very crux of what is lacking in the perspective of the trade unions today—a perspective shared by all union leaders, including those who deem themselves "architects of the future." Collective bargaining, with all of its paraphernalia, does not come vitally to grips with the problem posed by Blum. Indeed there is no evidence that the union leadership is even aware of this problem. For the leadership—and, to be candid, for the overwhelming bulk of the membership—it is sufficient that grievance procedure has been established by the union and that the bargaining process improves or at least sustains the material level already achieved.

Now it is of course true that grievance procedure in a unionized

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* "Further structural evolution seems destined to complete the process of [occupational] integration in a short time. It will come about mainly as a result of market structures in which the union operates and the efforts by some of the leaders to achieve greater centralization—efforts which do not meet serious resistance by the rank and file. Today too the enlarged jurisdiction and huge membership of the IBT (International Brotherhood of Teamsters) open the door to the emergence of a general labor union if those heading the organization feel that goal to be desirable." (*The Relationship Between Structure and Policy in the Teamsters Union,* Robert D. Leiter, a paper presented to the Industrial Relations Research Association, Sept. 5–7, 1957.)

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factory affords important protection to workers. But grievance machinery does not—nor is it designed to—seriously reconstruct the rationalized, authoritarian system of production in which the worker occupies the status of a "factor of production." Actually grievance procedure tends to become a contributing factor to the rationalization of production in the factory. But it does not change the social nature of the work process itself. A survey conducted among workers in many unionized factories would prove that over the past fifteen years work has become more, rather than less, brutalized. This is true even in automated factories, despite the fact that the heavy "bull work," dirt, dust and grime have largely been eliminated.

Studies have been made to learn what happens to workers who, after years in non-automated plants, were transferred to automated plants. In the old plant, work stations were close to each other and often the jobs did not call for constant attention. Consequently workers could find some time to talk with each other and had some control over their pace of work. But in the automated plant, work stations were individually isolated and the worker had to keep his mind steadily fixed on his work or run the risk of damaging thousands of dollars worth of equipment. The worker found himself under constant nervous strain. Relations between workers and supervision also became more strained in the automated plant. William A. Faunce, in his study, "Automation in the Automobile Industry" (Michigan State University) quotes a worker as saying:

> We have 100 men in the [automated] department and we have five foremen. Before we had 134 men and one foreman and one assistant. It was better on the old job. Nobody breathing down your neck. Over here it's altogether different, just push, push, push all the time.
>
> They never say hello . . . treat you like a machine. They used to be friendlier. Now they seem to be under a strain. The foremen at the plant have too much to do and too much responsibility and they get tired and cranky. They'll die of a heart attack yet.

In his *Automobile Workers and the American Dream,* Ely Chinoy describes how the steady mechanization of production increasingly widens the gap between management and labor and steadily narrows the range of opportunity open to most manual workers. As routine tasks performed by most workers become increasingly rationalized, intelligence and control tend to be concentrated in the hands of technicians and supervisors, while workers will have little opportunity to use independent judgment, exercise responsibility or acquire meaningful skills.

When veteran unionists express nostalgia for the early formative days of their union, they are thinking not so much about strike militancy or other values cherished by radicals, but about the degree of initiative and participation that workers could then exercise on the job and in the local union meetings. Twenty years ago, when the CIO was still in its crusading stage, unions in mass production industries played a far more vital role at the shop level than they do today. Over the years institutionalized contract procedures have been strengthened

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to channel power away from the shop level and into the hands of a centralized union authority. The steward has become a referral agent.

Who, if anyone, is to blame for this development? Some writers place the blame on "bureaucratically-motivated leaders"; others on the "apathetic rank-and-file workers." But aren't both of these actually effects of a deeper cause? Isn't the root problem to be located in the social relations of the production process itself? To test this hypothesis, one might begin by exploring the implications of the "sole prerogative principle." A sole prerogative clause is contained in almost all union contracts, sometimes spelled out, sometimes implied. In plain words this clause means that the employer has the sole right to determine what is to be produced, how it is to be produced, how much is to be produced, what plants are to be built and where, how much capital is to be invested, what kinds of machinery are to be installed, when workers are to be hired and when they are to be laid off, and how production operations are to be rationalized.

The social power to make these all-important decisions, which vitally affect the lives of the workers, is vested solely in management. The union of course can and does negotiate contract provisions which offer a degree of protection to workers when management exercises its sole rights. And in practice certain union privileges do limit management's "sole prerogatives."

For instance, a company, if it wishes to, has the right to close down an obsolete plant and transfer its operations to a new plant in another state; however, in making this move the company must observe the seniority provisions of the contract. The sole prerogative principle signifies that the workers are divorced from the *decisive* control over the system of production. This divorcement forms the very essence of the social relationship in the work process. But within the framework of this social relationship the union serves as the workers' bargaining agent, negotiating the terms by which the workers adjust to and perhaps modify the production process controlled by management.

As we have seen, the contract helps to rationalize the management control system by defining the procedures which must be followed when grievances arise in the factory. In the early days of the UAW there was a degree of genuine industrial democracy which has now just about entirely disappeared. Workers on the job made crucial decisions about production standards, rest periods, fatigue time, personal needs, etc. But such independent collective action by workers is not only difficult to maintain in a highly rationalized and mechanical industry; it runs counter to the relationships symbolized by management's prerogatives.

Old-time unionists like to recall how workers would pack union membership meetings years ago. If, for example, a major grievance developed in a shop department, the workers at the close of the shift would flock to the union hall and thresh out the problem with their stewards and local officers. It took a long time to abandon such habits and to teach them "proper grievance procedure." But as the years

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passed they became conditioned to follow institutionalized procedures and in the process membership spontaneity waned. In the process of displacing this spontaneous initiative by a system of rationalized contract procedures, the unions become more centralized and major labor policies are handed down from the top; and when this happens, union democracy tends more and more to become "controlled democracy." It may well be, as one often hears from union leaders, students of the labor movement and even rank-and-file workers, that this is part of an inevitable process, following upon the rationalization of the work relationship, the increasing complexity of collective bargaining, the centralization of all social relationships in the modern world. Perhaps; but if so, then we ought to realize what this process does to working people. And if we realize this, then we might be more inclined toward the kind of social action which will try to counter and modify this process—which is, perhaps, "inevitable" only as we acquiesce in it.

One can visualize what is likely to happen next: As old members retire, as the new technology changes the composition of the labor force, and new and younger workers come into industry, the old ideals and traditions of the labor movement will become dimmer and dimmer. A few decades ago a new worker was soon approached by the steward in the shop, who would urge him to join the union and pay dues. Now the new worker learns about the union through the union shop and the checkoff, which, for all its advantages, weakens contact between the workers and the steward and contributes to inactivity and apathy among union members. Professor Bernard Karsh has discussed this problem with insight:

> How many of the new entrants into factory employment will develop the attitudes and ideals characteristic of trade union tradition? The union movement of the future will be but a pale image of the present one, let alone of the new unionism of the middle and later 1930's unless ways can be found to reach the large proportion of members presently described as apathetic, who operate with a value system which is a departure from the intended or original values of the trade union movement. These are workers who see the union not as an abstract ideal, but through the cash-nexus of the union shop, the check-off and the pay off. . . . The professed ideals of trade unionism will disappear through ignorance or become transformed to make them compatible with the value system of the apathetic—or local union power will increasingly depend upon the formal structure of authority and the appointed or elected officials who exercise that authority from points of power which may be even more distant to the rank and file than the local union. ["Union Tradition and Membership Apathy," by Bernard Karsh, in *Power in Industrial Relations,* Industrial Relations Research Association series.]

The problem posed by Karsh represents one of the main crises in the labor movement. How can it be solved? Who will take the initiative—or, as workers in the shop would say, "Who will stick their necks out"—in the struggle to awaken democratic activity in the ranks? Twenty years ago such initiative could have been taken by an intelligent opposition group in a local union. But what chance does an opposition movement have in the big unions today? For an answer to this question the reader is referred to an article by H. W. Benson in *The Pro-*

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gressive, May 1959, entitled "Labor's Uncertain Trumpet." Benson gives a forthright account of what happened in the Chicago Lodge 113 of the International Association of Machinists when a group of active union members attempted to clean up financial irregularities and introduce a measure of genuine democracy in the affairs of the Lodge. The reform movement was suppressed and the leaders were expelled from the union. "A special International trial board was created by President Al Hayes; the charges were prepared under the careful aegis of the administrator, appointed by Hayes, the verdict was handed down by Hayes; the appellants have ultimate recourse to a convention still two years away where Hayes will be in full control." What could better symbolize the ethical crisis in the labor movement than the fact that the man who acted as head inquisitor to stamp out the heresy of rank-and-file democracy in IAM lodge 113 is not only the international president of the IAM, but also the chairman of the AFL-CIO Ethical Practices Committee!

SOMEWHERE MARTIN BUBER writes that trade unions have no access to the life of society: they are cut off from any direct involvement in, any major decisions about, the conditions of production. Paradoxically, it is the very success of American trade unionism during the past few decades, its sizable achievement in improving the conditions of millions of workers, which brings to the forefront of attention these apparently "academic" and "abstract" matters—matters that had previously been the concern only of those socialists and other persons who tried to think beyond the needs of the moment. *The very success of the unions makes clearer and clearer what the limits of their possibilities are,* so long as they function as part of the job-control system and accept the *status quo.* Not only is this true in respect to the larger social and humane goals of a kind that could vitally affect the life of the worker, though they have seldom been seriously considered by the unions. It is also true for a good many problems that *have* traditionally been union problems. Let there come a major shift in technology that affects jobs (see B. J. Widick's article in the current DISSENT) and even the most powerful and progressive trade union is rendered virtually helpless; it pays a price for its acquiescence in things as they are. If the unions do an efficient job as a service agency but rest content within a society which divorces the working people from its vital processes—what urgent reason, truthfully speaking, do the workers then have for participating in the union, what strong appeal can the union make to new members?

But more. Just as the workers are alienated from the vital processes of society, so are they alienated from the vital decisions of the union. Whether with a dictatorial or benevolent intent, whether from a crude contempt for the ranks or a kindly feeling that it knows better, the leadership of the trade unions increasingly appropriates to itself crucial powers. Democracy means above all the diffusion of power, and therefore is a threat to the existence of any power elite. This diffusion

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the trade union leadership instinctively resists, even when it is "correct" and sincere in its devotion to the procedures of formal democracy. And except in a few unions, like the International Typographical Workers, which remains, comparatively, a model of trade union democracy, control mechanisms have become so firmly and subtly developed in most unions that any incipient movement for initiative and rank-and-file self-government is soon stamped out. Hence the apathy which has now reached the proportions of a crisis so severe that it worries even some of the leaders who have helped bring it into being.

Sometimes denied the opportunity and other times not trained or encouraged to develop the habit of initiative and spontaneous self-activity which is the living content of democracy, workers become not merely passive but cynical about the unions. This leads to the characteristic attitude one finds among the teamsters—Hoffa is a scoundrel, perhaps, but "he delivers, doesn't he? I'm getting mine and he's getting his." AFL-CIO President Meany has said that the rank-and-file holds the key to stamping out racketeering; but can anyone imagine the officialdom of our trade unions encouraging thousands of rank-and-file unionists to take the kind of initiative implied by Meany's words? Every intrenched leadership operates on the theory that a little democracy can be a dangerous thing, for there is no telling how far it may spread and whom it may disturb.*

Countertrends

The changes taking place in industry are contradictory and unpredictable. Formulations about the labor movement which made sense in the past could be misleading today. For instance, it is true to say that labor's organizational drives, except in a few areas, have virtually ground to a halt. But one should be wary about making hard-and-fast forecasts. Can anyone say with assurance that some "spontaneous combustion" won't take place among Southern textile workers in rebellion against substandard pay and sweatshop conditions?

Or consider professional, technical and white-collar workers. Some writers adduce "convincing" reasons to support the theory that most of these workers can never be organized. They think, we are told, in terms of professionalism, not unionism; moreover, employers cut the ground from under the unions by granting occasional concessions to white-collar and professional personnel. But isn't the new technology which is revolutionizing the work process in the factory also having

* "... the McClellan disclosures produced no revolts in the ranks. The men and women who pay the dues were voiceless. The reform was a purely top affair and therefore of restricted scope. The AFL-CIO leaders run bureaucratized organizations and had neither the capacity nor the desire to appeal to the ranks to stage internal revolts within their unions. Hence, they had no alternative course but to drop the recalcitrant unions and to sacrifice those union officials who had been caught red-handed. The cleanup campaign will eliminate a few crooked leaders and will institute some improved procedures, but the character, leadership, and direction of the present union movement will be little altered; neither will it stop the decay or retreat." (Bert Cochran, in *American Labor in Midpassage*, Monthly Review Press.)

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an impact on office work? And as for professional workers, do the faint stirrings toward unionism, which are now taking place among some office workers and engineers (e.g., in Chrysler) hold no significance for the future? Only a year or two before the CIO upsurge in Detroit, Akron and Toledo during the early thirties, some leaders argued that mass production workers could never be organized. Granted that the obstacles barring the way to organizing the unorganized are tremendous. But are they insurmountable? Social scientists can explain the impact of technology on the work process in tangible terms. But the processes of social consciousness are not so palpable, at least not until they manifest themselves in overt acts.

From the available evidence it would appear that in the coming period the unions, especially those in the big mass production industries, will be encountering more and more problems that they cannot solve. They cannot solve these problems for the reason explained above —namely, because organized labor, removed from a decisive role in production, is in no position to deal adequately with the dislocations generated by the new technology: areas of critical unemployment, the growing proportion of skilled and technical workers to unskilled and semi-skilled, the haunting fear of unemployment that hovers over factories slated to be replaced by new plants elsewhere. While the unions can't solve these problems, they can at least adjust their collective bargaining machinery in a way that will offer some measure of protection to workers affected by these changes. In this respect the UAW has pioneered. Perhaps no other union has worked out so many protective contract devices to help workers affected by automation and geographical decentralization.

But all too many unions respond dully to such matters. In September 1956 the Bureau of Labor Statistics issued a report entitled: "Union Adjustment to Technological Change." We are informed by this report that in 1953 the Bureau of Labor Statistics examined 1,410 collective bargaining agreements for specific references to technological changes and their effects on workers. These agreements represented all industries, including those in which technical change was not an immediate problem. Although by 1953 the force of the "Second Industrial Revolution" was already so strong as to impel some unions to "... study the new technological developments and their implications for the welfare of the membership for the purpose of developing appropriate policies," only a small percentage of the unions were sufficiently aroused to do anything about the problem at the conference table.

WORKERS KNOW that they have no real control over the work process and so, often enough, they hate their work. They also become aware of the separation between themselves and the union officialdom and so they look upon their officers as a group distinct and apart from themselves, "they" instead of "we." This separation between leaders and ranks leads to "stability" of a kind. Gus Tyler, in *A New Philosophy of Labor,* has this to say:

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> Idealism flourishes most readily in "unstable" industrial situations, the kind of conflict that calls forth inspired leaders, who in turn ignite great masses of rank and filers to stand up and fight. It is the hotly contested organizing campaign—the picket line, the endless hours of intense emotional involvement in the struggle—that produces great leaders, moving masses, grass-root upheavals, martyrs, and ultimately poems and programs worth the suffering.
>
> It is this creative ferment that stability makes unlikely, if not impossible. Instead of the picket line, you have the conference table; instead of the action of the mass, you have the talk of the top bargainer; *instead of rank-and-file involvement in social disputes, you have the professional presentation before the arbitrator.* All of this is much more "civilized" than in the early days of struggle, but it all leads to loss of idealism at both top and bottom. This is especially true when it is continued over a period of time, when the first generation of fighting leadership dies off, retires, or is removed, and a second generation that knew not genesis comes into power. [Emphasis added.]

No one has ever described the problem more graphically. The big question facing the unions today is this: How, in an era of highly-institutionalized collective bargaining procedures, when top union officials can channel major grievances to an arbitrator and thus escape the need of answering to the rank and file—how can idealism and membership involvement be revived? Must the labor movement wait until industrial situations again become "unstable"? If so, how unstable need they become? Or will unions continue to "mature," to become ever more institutionalized, until they are mere service agencies ruled by a remote officialdom and staffed by experts and professionals?

Perhaps the whole range of problems that I have been trying to present here can, for the sake of dramatic effect, be reduced to one: *It seems certain that in the coming years there will be in the U.S. a complex of trade unions, stronger or weaker, more honest or corrupt, larger or smaller than in the past; but it is something of a question whether we shall continue to have a vital, democratic and idealistic labor movement.* By a labor movement I do not—let me hasten to say—mean a socialist movement, though it seems to me indisputable that the presence of the former owed a great deal to the latter; and almost as evident that if we continue to be without a socialist movement, we may also end up without a labor movement. No, by a labor movement I mean an association of trade unions—more important, of trade unionists—who, while legitimately concerned to protect the material needs of their members, also have some vision of more than routine service and efficiency; who feel that in some sense they are committed to a vision of life; who serve as a source of hope and identification for many persons outside the labor movement; who may even seem, as once they did, models of a more selfless and devoted life than can usually be provided by our commercial society. None of the specific problems I have discussed are necessarily indications of the depth of the crisis in the trade unions today; much more so is the fact that it is possible, and necessary, for a sympathetic observer to raise the kind of question with which I end this article. For it is a question whether there will be purpose with the strength, spirit with the flesh.

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THE MINERS: MEN WITHOUT WORK

Harvey Swados

The miners have been called in the past the backbone of the American labor movement. Never yet broken in to the abject life of the workers in the industrial cities, they have still a tradition of resistance and a habit of joint action.—EDMUND WILSON, *"Frank Keeney's Coal Diggers"*

ST. MICHAEL, PENNSYLVANIA

It is a strange thing to come to a town and find it full of grown men. They stroll the narrow, shabby streets, chat at the corners, lean against the peeling pillars of the town saloon, the St. Michael Hotel & Restaurant, and they look more like movie actors than real human beings, because something is wrong.

Then you ask for one of them by name, in this town where it is obvious that everyone knows everyone else, and you get the reply, "Oh, he'll be along any minute. Today's sign-up day." And it is borne in upon you that these men are subsisting on unemployment insurance checks, that this is a community where practically all of the able-bodied men have been out of work for many months. Where are the children? In school, although most of these people are older and no longer have small children. Where are the teen-agers? Looking for work, moved away, trying their luck elsewhere. Where are the women? Working, many of them—which is a story in itself.

St. Michael is a company town (of the Berwind-White Coal Mining Co.) tucked into one of the many folds of the mountains of Western Pennsylvania. It is as American as any town you could want, by any standards you could name. But the menfolk are practically all out of work, and have been ever since the 24th of April, 1958, when Maryland Shaft #1 closed down. This may be why there is not much travel agency business for Caribbean cruises. In its own way, however, it is a tourist attraction, or would be, if tourists could ever find their way to it over the winding, rutted, poorly-marked roads that tie it to all the other little mining communities of the region: for it was here thousands drowned in the Johnstown Flood. Today the old boathouse then used by wealthy summer residents from Johnstown and Pittsburgh stands high and dry on the St. Michael hillside—now a weather-beaten saloon, it is one of the four hangouts for the miners of St. Michael, who are proud of the tragic story of the area, just as they are proud of the tragic history of their calling.

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Six hundred and fifty of these men were working at Maryland #1 when the company started to mechanize. The number was gradually reduced to 400; then, after two layoffs and six months of part-time operation, there came a day which none of the miners had really believed could really come, even though there had been signs, hints, warnings. The mine shut down.

It is not practically relevant whether the closing was a result of there being too much coal or too many men. What matters is what is happening to the people. Later on we shall return to the larger issues of increased productivity resulting from mechanization and concomitant shifts in fuel usage. For now let us stay with the men.

IT WAS ONLY A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO that the coal dust problem was so bad in St. Michael that a civic committee was formed to cope with it. "I was used to not recognizing my husband, to say nothing of the other men who'd come out of the mine and wave to me," says one miner's wife. "But the coal dust got so bad that it lay over the town like a pall. Everything was covered with it, and we got worried, not just about silicosis down in the mines, but about what it was going to do to all of us right out on the streets."

The dust too was a by-product of mechanization, a result of the automatic miners chewing away furiously hundreds of feet under the earth, and the company informed the committee that there was no point in investing the large sum that would be necessary to abate the nuisance, since it was already losing money on every carload of coal being taken from Maryland #1. All too soon thereafter the mine closed down, and the dust stopped sifting through the streets. The committee was disbanded. . . .

Most of the miners have been used to seasonal operations, working winters and taking off summers, and for quite a long time they assumed that this was to be just another layoff. But then the summer was over, fill-in jobs elsewhere in the area did not seem to be available, and the company took out its expensive automatic equipment and moved some of it down to Maryland Shaft #2, half a dozen miles away at Wilmore. At that point the miners and their families began to face up to the reality of their prospects, and habits began to change. The first item to stop moving at the general store was dog food. After the dog food gathered dust, it was the bottled baby food in the little glass jars that stayed on the shelves. A while after that, the shopkeeper himself gave up and locked his doors forever.

The saloons are still going in St. Michael's Hotel, the Workers' Educational & Social Club, the American Legion Hall, and the old boathouse, but many of the whisky drinkers have switched to beer, many of the beer drinkers have switched to Squirt, and even more do not show up at all nowadays in the saloons.

"I used to spend between forty and fifty dollars every two weeks in the saloons," says one miner. "Now I never go any more. It's one

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thing to be a good fellow when you have it—it's a little different when you have no job."

The town barber, a horn-rimmed young man in a starched white shirt who is on the school board and looks startingly middle-class in a community that is overwhelmingly working class, stares at his cigar and muses over his beer at the Legion beer. "I bear no resentment to the miners who don't come in any more to have me cut their hair. I guess if I'd been out of work as long as they have, I'd ask my wife to cut my hair too."

SOME OF THE MINERS have managed to get jobs elsewhere. Hampered by the fact that their skills—and even more than their easily-acquired skills, such intangible assets as courage, fortitude, esprit de corps and insouciance in the face of continuous danger—are not readily transferable to other trades, they have been absorbed only in lower-paying jobs. Those who came from other communities and only boarded in St. Michael have gone home. A few have gotten into the steel mills, but not many. A few more have gotten construction work and jobs with the State Highway Department, but again not many; the men point to the million-dollar addition to the high school plant now going up with only seven miners among the construction crew, and they claim that it is impossible to get such a job without "politics." A number of the miners are now working, often for a third or less than what they used to earn, as orderlies in hospitals and institutions, and as janitors and stockmen in big stores. Some have tried to relocate—at least one man has been back and forth to California twice tracking down rumors of steady employment there—only to return to home grounds when jobs haven't materialized. Practically everyone, they say, would come rushing back to St. Michael if Maryland #1 were to reopen, even those few who have gotten good-paying jobs elsewhere (a man with seniority is allowed up to three weeks to re-apply for his job). Mining is something that gets in a man's blood, and a coal mine is a man's world in a way that a department store or a mental hospital can never be.

It is truly ironic that a substantial proportion of these men, who pride themselves on their ability to live with danger, to work hard, fight hard, drink hard, love hard, are now learning housework and taking over the woman's role in the family.

What happened was terribly simple. When it became apparent that the mine was not going to reopen, the men signed up for unemployment insurance and their wives began to look for work. Committees were set up—as they have been, hopefully, sometimes pathetically, in similarly depressed areas in Kentucky, West Virginia, Illinois and Michigan—to see what could be done about bringing in new businesses that could provide employment. The ones that did come to the Western Pennsylvania area were those that could benefit not only from tax rebates, low rents, cheap utilities, and other enticements, but also from a substantial pool of people hungry for work—almost

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any kind of work at almost any kind of wage. Now there are in the area a scattering of small garment factories, brassieres, shirts, shirtwaists, children's wear, all employing not men but women to bend over their sewing machines.

So the women go out to work in the new factories at minimum wages and the men stay home, running the washing machines and the vacuum cleaners, doing the shopping and the dusting, often babysitting, occasionally cooking and scrubbing. There are variations. Some wives hire themselves out as cleaning women to middle-class homes in other towns while their husbands serve as cleaning women at home. There are rebellions too. One husband sits in the saloon waiting for his wife to finish her shift and come after him at midnight, which she does, standing in the doorway in her pedal-pushers, her arms folded, smiling tiredly but firmly until he shoves back his chair, finishes his beer, and walks her home. He insists on playing his role as a man even if he cannot do his work as a man, and one can only guess as to whether his wife loves him any less than do those women whose husbands have taken to drowsing in front of the TV after they have finished the dishes and await their wives' return from the factory. But these are for the most part younger women; it is hard for a woman in her fifties to keep up with the production pace in a factory, and a number of them have had to give it up and reluctantly rejoin their husbands on the rockers or the porch steps.

WHAT ELSE DOES A MAN DO besides keep house and rock, and hang around the saloon, after he has been out of work for fourteen months? One miner says, "I've been going from town to town, city to city, every place within a hundred miles of here, looking for work. I know it's a wild goose chase. I'm too old. My own boy is thirty-two, or maybe thirty-three, with three kids of his own, and *he* can't find work. One or two places where he could have had work as a carpenter, he couldn't get a journeyman's card in the union. So what chance do I stand? Just the same, I keep trying—it keeps me occupied."

Those men who have given up looking, or are working sporadically here and there, now and then, put in a lot of time hunting and fishing in the neighborhood. The miners of this area are as fanatical a lot of fishermen as you will find anywhere in the United States; and they also like to come home with deer, pheasant and sometimes even bear. This is not the least of the ties that bind these jobless men to their home place. There are others, which have to be understood if the men and their problems are to be fully understood.

The miners of St. Michael have banded together and purchased (with money borrowed from their local union) the huge old home of the former mine superintendent, on a bluff overlooking the valley, and have christened it "The Sportsmen's Club." Here, in addition to over sixty acres of wooded recreation and picnic grounds and a *boccie* court, they have a big screened-in run that they built themselves to hold more than 500 baby pheasants which they acquired

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from the state conservation authorities and will release for hunting when they are grown. The Sportsmen's Club is one more social center that is their very own, in addition to the Legion Hall and the Workers' Educational & Social Club, down the street from each other and from the St. Michael Hotel. Most of the big social events are held in the Legion Hall, which is decorated with blowup photographs of the local boys—all with Slavic or Croatian names—who have played football at the great state universities, some of them in the Rose Bowl. (The football scholarship is not a joke in St. Michael: it is a very practical way for miners' sons to get a college education and so move on and out into another world.)

It doesn't take much of an excuse to throw a party either; and whether it is a testimonial for a local hero, or a blowout with the $100 the company gives when the mine operates for a year without a fatal accident (not too often, unfortunately), a sheep is roasted, a pig is spitted, the liquor flows, and, as one miner who has the scars to prove it says, "You get twenty-six miners together and you have twenty-seven fights." The oratory is as pungent as the food. "You women," the toastmaster is fondly remembered as having said to the wives last Christmas, "went and voted for Eisenhower. Well, now you've all got jobs!" Lithuanian slugs it out with Ukrainian; Pole battles with Welshman; and they all stick together against owners, outsides and union bureaucrats.

Over at the Workers' Educational & Social Club (also refurbished and enlarged with a loan from the union local) there are, in addition to the bar and the miniature bowling alleys, a meeting hall, kitchens, a library, and a parlor where those miners are laid out who choose to die and be buried without the consolation—or interference—of organized religion.

This is a very special kind of life, and a miner knows what he is missing when he tries his luck in the cities or the suburbs.

"More than one of our boys has gone off to Pittsburgh or Cleveland and come back because he couldn't stand those cement lawns."

"In a big city, you have to pick a fight with a stranger. Here in St. Michael, you can fight with your friends."

"Seriously, here we all know each other, we're clannish, we stick together, we help each other out. It's a good place to live."

It's also a cheap place to live. The company houses, put up during the depression, are comfortable and have pleasant yards, even if their plumbing is simple and the roads around them are sooty and potholed; they rent for from $9 to $14.25 a month. When you consider too that water and sewage are provided directly from the mine's pumps at a nominal price, as is 25 cycle electricity (even with the mine shut down), you can understand why $25 a day is a first-class wage for a miner in a company town, even if the mine only has orders enough to run three or four days a week. Naturally mine families are reluctant to trade in all this—in addition to fish and game and the produce of all the farms that checkerboard the mining country—for

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the inflation of the metropolis and the suburb.

There is an even more compelling economic reason for the unemployed miners of St. Michael not wanting to leave the industry or the community. According to the United Mine Workers' contracts, a miner must have worked for twenty years out of the last thirty in order to be eligible for a $100 a month pension at the age of sixty. You can't live, much less support a family on that sum, but when it is added to social security, savings and life insurance, it can make the difference between a comfortable old age and a miserable one. Seniority leading up to pension eligibility, however, cannot be transferred from one company to another, or even from one mine of a company to another, unless there is such a shortage of miners that you can move onto a panel and directly into another mine without going to the bottom of the list.

Thus if you are forty-eight years old and have worked in the mines for thirty years, you are not going to receive any pension at all unless you can get in two more years before you reach the age of sixty. It is hard to believe that somehow, some time during the next dozen years you will not be able to get in two more years in the mines to qualify for the pension. There are a lot of these borderline men, desperately hanging on—much more desperately than the younger men who have seen their pension hopes go glimmering and who are ready to sell out and move away, even though they discover that their possessions too have become as worthless as their retirement plans, with their 25 cycle electric stoves and television sets quite unsaleable in a community which may never again use the mine's power lines. And of course there are quite a few men safely past fifty, who have the twenty years under their belts, and now have nothing to worry about beyond surviving and supporting their families in one way or another for the next decade, until they reach pension age.

Meanwhile, unemployment insurance is running out.

As these lines are written, most of the miners of St. Michael have six more checks (of about $30) coming to them. When these lines are read, the checks will have stopped. What then?

"After the last check," says one of the younger men, "comes the revolution."

Well, maybe. But probably not. In order to hazard some sort of guess as to what lies in store for these hundreds of Americans, and for many more thousands like them, from Illinois to West Virginia, we shall have to leave St. Michael for a moment and consider the problem of coal nationally.

FOR THE PAST DECADE the coal miner has been squeezed from two directions: by mechanization and by the introduction of increasingly popular substitute fuels. While output per man per day has almost doubled in that decade (from 6.26 tons per day in 1948 to 11.3 tons per day in 1958), the number of men employed in the mines has been more than halved, from 441,631 to 218,600. And as a result

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not only of slumps but of competition from gas (whose production has increased 365 per cent in the last 15 years) and fuel oils, coal production has receded from a peak of over 600 million tons in 1947 to less than 500 million tons.

The railroads, once major consumers of coal, have now practically converted to diesels; household heating, formerly fueled with the coal-stoked furnace, has lately converted so largely to gas or oil that anthracite mining—confined to three Pennsylvania counties—is all but moribund; when we speak of coal nowadays, for all ordinary purposes we are speaking of bituminous.

It is electricity (in addition to steel, stationary at about 100 million tons) that is expected to take up the slack. With the production of energy from mineral fuels and water power already doubled in the last twenty years, it is now forecast that coal production will have to increase by 50 per cent to meet the expanded energy demands of 1975. Does this mean that more men will be needed to mine coal, or even that most of the currently unemployed miners will be put back to work? One would have to be a professional optimist (or a union official) to think so.

For one thing, the development of alternative sources of energy has not ended. Atomic power may not be presently economic; that does not mean that it never will be. For another, the inexorable development of mechanization has not yet come to a halt, even though it is true that it is nearing the saturation point: mechanical mining machines which can mine up to eight tons of coal per minute, and other new equipment, now cut about 85 per cent of all underground coal production. The development has been truly fantastic, as extreme perhaps as in any other industry. It would seem a logical inference that those mines which for one reason or another are not susceptible of economic mechanization will have to give way to those that are.

We need hardly be surprised that the National Coal Association is both proud of its adventure in mechanization and enthusiastic about the prospects for coal. But it does seem a trifle unusual—particularly in a period of mass unemployment in the industry—that the United Mine Workers should refuse to yield precedence to the operators in their eagerness to welcome the man-displacing machine and their Rotarian optimism about coal's future.

Indeed, the visitor to the Mine Workers' somber and dignified headquarters in Washington is bombarded by the union's research men with data and statistics arrayed to buttress what is obviously the John L. Lewis line: mechanization benefits the miner, and new uses for electric power will vastly increase the need for coal in the years ahead. One thing is sure, no one can charge Mr. Lewis with being soft on feather-bedding. His aides are anxious to demonstrate that the union has gone along wholeheartedly with mechanization. (In 1930 10 per cent of coal production was mechanically loaded, in 1956 85.4 per cent; in 1930 8.3 per cent was mechanically cleaned, in 1956 61 per cent; and by now nearly nine tenths of all mined coal

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is mechanically cut). True, facts are mixed with foolishness, as in current efforts to beat the drums not only for heat pumps and coal by wire, but also for electric automobiles and coal-fired home furnaces. And Mr. Lewis's propagandizing for technical progress seems to stop short when it comes to projects like the St. Lawrence Seaway, the economic development of atomic energy, and the mechanization of competing fuel industries.

Nevertheless the figures pour forth from the Research and Marketing Department of the UMW. It is only when the visitor asks for a figure on the number of coal miners out of work as a result of mechanization and competition of other fuels that silence suddenly descends.

The conversation is shifted to the 65,000 men on pension. But no, the visitor insists, that is not what he meant—it is rather the men of working age in the union who are not now working. Finally, with extreme reluctance, there comes an estimate of perhaps 50,000 men.

And what is to become of these men?

Once again there is great enthusiasm expressed for electric power, the increasing amounts of coal it will demand, and the great proved reserves of coal—estimated at 1,900 years' worth—waiting to be dug. But by the unemployed miners?

Probably not. The price of progress. Some must fall by the wayside as others progress. It's a cruel world.

SEVERAL INFERENCES seem inescapable. First, that the union's estimated figure on unemployment, about which it seems to prefer not to speak, is very likely as deflated as its membership figure is inflated. (On the same visit, actual working members in anthracite were estimated at 30-40,000, and in bituminous at around 300,000 full and part time miners. Both figures bear no relation to those released by the U. S. Bureau of Mines or by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and would seem to be based less on reality than on the growing need to prevent the UMW from being tabbed as numerically a second- or third-class union.)

Second, that Mr. Lewis has more or less decided to cut his losses, concentrate on consolidating the solid gains of a steadily shrinking membership—while maintaining the facade of an enormous organization —and trust to time and mortality to resolve once and for all the problem of the unemployed workers in the coal fields, and so erase them from the agenda of the union and from the public conscience as well. Certainly Mr. Lewis has not recently been devoting himself as passionately to pressing the case of the displaced miners as he has to furthering such concerns of the operators as aiding the career of one of the most conservative and sanctimonious men in public life: "Senators of long service," observed Marquis Childs in a recent syndicated newspaper column, "are saying they have never experienced such pressures as are being applied to bring about the confirmation of Admiral Lewis L. Strauss as Secretary of Commerce. The pressures

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come from a wide range of sources, indicating an extensive and thoroughly prepared campaign. Several Senators have had telephone calls from John L. Lewis . . . Lewis' theme is that Strauss, as Secretary of Commerce, would be helpful to the coal interests. . . ."

One long-time critic of the Lewis leadership in Washington is particularly bitter in his condemnation of the failure of the UMW (which he estimates at little more than 160,000 actual members) to take positive measures to protect the interests of the unemployed. With labor displacement in the coal industry greater per 1,000 employed than in any other industry, no program has yet been proposed for the vegetating displaced miners. He attributes this in part to the fact that 90 per cent of the union's executive board are appointees, in part to the fact that the delegates who attend the union's quadrennial conventions are *working* miners, with no substantial grievances if they are getting from three to five days' work a week, and with the laid-off and the pensioners unrepresented. At the last convention, a delegate who arose to discuss the plight of the unemployed and to suggest that perhaps the shorter work-week might be explored as one way to spread the work among the membership, was very coolly received by his fellow-delegates, and then was verbally torn to pieces by a buckshot charge of oratory from John L. Lewis himself.

Not only is seniority meaningless in an aging industry; in effect, this critic observes, the UMW is being subsidized in areas like western Pennsylvania by the garment unions, with their lower wage rates.

IT WOULD BE UNFAIR, however, to assume that the UMW is doing nothing at all for the welfare of its unemployed members. The Washington headquarters is at pains to point out that the UMW is cooperating with "area development organizations" wherever they are being set up by local businessmen and chambers of commerce in the hope of attracting new industry (including, presumably, more garment factories) to blighted areas. It is also campaigning for revision of mine safety regulations—which at present apply only to operations employing at least fifteen miners—so that they will include all working miners, even those in the most marginal strip mines; it points with justified indignation to the fact that these little operations are by far the most dangerous, with only two per cent of coal production accounting for 25 per cent of all fatalities in the industry.

What does this matter of safety have to do with unemployment? A lot. In an area which we have not discussed so far, the coal mining country of Kentucky, West Virginia and Tennessee, the operators had leased the land in which they drilled their mines from local people who had owned it for generations. As the mines were worked out, or were proved unsuitable for mechanized operation, the operators pulled out and turned the land, and the mines, back to the men from whom they had leased it and who had often been working for them.

These men too have been existing on unemployment insurance

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and government surplus food. Since the mines are on their land, a good many of them have gone back to digging on their own, trying to pull out enough leftover coal to eke out a living. In a way it is as if unemployed steelworkers or auto workers were to club together to turn out steel or automobiles in competition with the big corporations. In this peculiarly American form of free enterprise one man can have as many as 92 mines on his property, with each mine being picked at by from two to four men scattered along the worked-out mountainside. Naturally their productivity is terribly low, as low as two tons per man, and since they are at the mercy of the brokers to whom they must sell for whatever they can get, they very often wind up with a couple of dollars for a day's dangerous and backbreaking work.

These are the men, digging away in the dogholes, as they are called, who are not covered by mine safety regulations, and whom you may read about from time to time in little newspaper items, either in connection with the odd and complicated Harlan County strike, or with the all too frequent cave-ins (last spring an entire family of nine men was entombed in a doghole). If the UMW is successful, the dogholes will have to be certified by inspectors before they can be worked. And what will happen to the men, who will at least be prevented from taking so many chances in hacking away at the only thing they know how to do? Their strange senseless heroism in the year 1959 can perhaps be seen as analogous to the bravery of soldiers dying in a war which cannot possibly benefit them, their families, or their heirs—to say nothing of the entire social order of which they are a part.

ONE WOULD THINK, as one gets closer to the workers themselves than Washington, D. C., that there would be a greater awareness of their problems and a deeper searching for possible answers. The office of District 2 of the UMW, which includes the miners of St. Michael, is located in the county seat of Ebensburg, Pa. about seventeen winding miles from St. Michael. It has taken over an old mansion in the better part of town and it is staffed by Lewis appointees.

A visitor walks in and asks why so many men are being laid off in the district. Because they were unfortunate enough to be stuck in uneconomic low-seam mines which do not adapt to mechanization as well as the mines of District 5 or West Virginia. But even with a six per cent increase in tonnage nationally, men are being laid off everywhere. Then what is the answer?

"I don't really know."

Once again, there is the story of efforts to attract new industry, with its usually turning out to be light industry, employing women. As for the men in District 2 who are still working, with the exception of the captive mines, working hard to stockpile metallurgical coal in expectation of a steel strike, they are averaging three days a week, and glad to have jobs, with the prospect of occasionally picking up a fourth or fifth day of work. The fact is simply that with three days of work the operators take out all the coal they can sell: which is

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one more reason for the cutbacks.

What about the men who aren't working?

"They don't come in here, so we don't get any complaints at the office. We're not in touch with them."

And what will happen when the unemployment insurance runs out?

"I don't know how they'll get along."

The truth is that no one really does know. The barber of St. Michael may be as close to the truth as anyone when he observes that the men were so stunned by the closing of the mine that they are still in a state of shock, and unable to face the reality that they may never again be able to work at their chosen trade.

UNTIL YOU GO DOWN THE PIT, it is difficult to sense how much mining can mean to a man, or how strange and unlikely it can seem that you are not going to work when others near you are working. The men who work at Wilmore, in Maryland Shaft #2, are friends and neighbors of the St. Michael men; they have worked together in the past, and they still hunt and fish together. But the men at Wilmore are still working, proud—as the miners of St. Michael are proud—of the fact that they take out the finest coal in the country. Early in the morning, as the sun is just coming up over the nearby hills, they straggle into the big grimy locker room and strip to the skin, depositing their street clothing in wire baskets which they then haul to the high ceiling and secure with long double chains.

The impression is strong that the men have packed away their humor and lightheartedness with their street clothes; at any rate they seem brooding and thoughtful as they foregather in their dark neck-to-ankle working outfits, adjusting the lamps on their helmets and the big batteries that power them from the wide belts at their waists. They wait patiently for the elevator that will take them down to the other world. Here danger begins.

Down in the mine, the men clamber aboard the hooked-together cars pulled by electric locomotives, and clatter off to their separate work centers, starting down the main heading and then cutting off on the various spurs that dart away into the darkness like so many veins. You travel for perhaps a mile, then get off at the end of the line and plod along in a bent-necked stoop until you come to an extensible belt conveyor. Here you hitch a ride, stretching flat on your belly on the rattling leather belt-line. The increasing roar of heavy machinery tells you that you have arrived at the mechanical loader, and you move on crabwise, the glow of your lamp picking a path through the thick cloud of coal dust as you squat forward on your haunches.

You are at the face of the mine. You come alongside the mechanical miner, and you rest on your knees, watching the great continuous mining machine chewing its way into the coal seam with a remorseless roar. There is only the monstrous machine, and a handful

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of men. One of them shouts, "How far to go?" and the answer comes back: "Twenty feet."

You bend forward to cry into the superintendent's ear. "How long will it take to break through those twenty feet into the next chamber?"

"About forty-five minutes."

"How long would it have taken the men, without the machine?"

He answers laconically, his face already black and preoccupied as he squirts chewing tobacco. "Three shifts."

The slate roof sags, and the men use the machine to swiftly hoist a timber hydraulically into place before they press on. In this world without light and without women, the men are quick, daring, decisive. Formerly they could hear the roof starting to give so that they could quickly install timber props or run for safety; now the roar of the machine drowns out the little telltale sounds, and they must watch even more carefully. The dust, too, that used to rise all the hundreds of feet to the surface and rain down on the streets of St. Michael, is a thousand times thicker from the slashing machine than it used to be when the men attacked the seam themselves; you can taste the silicosis in the air as the thick particles parch your nasal passages and clog your lungs. Roof falls have been many and serious in this particular mine. They are a delay and a serious annoyance to the supervision, a challenge to the men, who must crawl about the too-low passages like dwarves or hunchbacks, shoring up the timbers and building cribs to protect the right of way.

Back on the surface the dirty coal rises in smoking carloads to the tipple. There you follow its course as it is cleaned, washed, sorted, through the towers high above the ground, and there too it seems impossible that the attack on the bowels of the earth will ever stop. How can a man who has been a part of it, who still lives within sight, sound and smell of the consuming drama, believe that he will not again be permitted to be an actor in it?

IN THE SALOONS, the saying goes, the miners love more women than they ever did above ground, and dig more coal than they ever did below ground. At St. Michael, they brag about their narrow escapes, and about their friends' past heroism, as well as about the quality of their coal and the quantity of it they have taken from the mine. And they wonder whether they will ever do it again. In the meantime, they wonder about the meantime.

"In 1922," the president of the local says, "I lived through the winter in a tent on top of that hill with my family. My father was out for eighteen months and we had nothing to live on, nothing. I can tell you one thing: we'll never go back to 1922 again."

"My family will never go hungry," another man says. He stares down into his glass of draught beer, and then looks up defiantly. "Not as long as I've got a rifle and two shotguns at home, they'll never go hungry. Maybe it's not a nice thing to say, but it's how I feel."

Others say the same, but it does not look as though it will come

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to that. When unemployment insurance runs out, the miners will be eligible to go on DPA (Department of Public Assistance). They will have to sign over their property to the State of Pennsylvania, and give up their insurance, but they will be allowed to keep their cars —as long as they demonstrate that they are using them to look for work.

They will do it, an old militant of the area believes, because they will have no alternative. They will cash in their policies and turn over their property in return for the dole and the opportunity to go on as they are now, waiting and hoping, some waiting for the pension, others just for their social security. They will continue to eat molly-grub, the federal government food surplus parcels so weighted with rice that, as one man remarks wryly, "You can get slant-eyed from eating so much of it."

"I am not disillusioned," the old radical insists. "But I am very tired. Even now, with the checks running out, they are apathetic, and willing to go on DPA. Yet if there were some leadership . . . Right now the officers of at least ten locals would come out for nationalization of the mines. With leadership, many more of the 184 locals certainly would. You heard them curse the old parties—they are looking and waiting for new leadership, and it doesn't seem to be forthcoming."

EVEN RECOGNITION of their problems does not seem to be forthcoming. It would seem axiomatic that the future of the miner is tied up with the future of the whole economy, and that any progress for the labor movement—as for the rest of us—will have to come through political action. The UMW vision of a new coal miner, mobile, no longer tied to the company town, living in a suburb and driving forty miles to work in a mechanized mine where he will be a technician operating a piece of machinery—this may not only be the ultimate reality, it may already be coming to pass. But surely we must think hard about what values of the declining generation will be transferred to a young man who will go into the mines not because it is as thrilling or challenging as going to sea or riveting a sky-scraper, but simply because it is a job that, although dirty and tire-some, has a good wage scale and a better pension plan; and about what his relations will be with his fellow-workers, whom he will not fish with, fight with, or drink with, but will see merely as anonymous black faces below the earth and anonymous white faces on the suburban-bound highways above the earth.

Only a romantic fool, and an ignorant one at that, would bewail the loss of blackbreaking, tortuous, dangerous, poisonous, drudgery, and its replacement by impersonally effective machinery. But the loss of fraternity, solidarity, and the comradeship of courageous accomplishment—these are all too precious and rare in the moral landscape of America, and if we allow their transmitters to rot and fade we commit an act even more criminal than the spoliation of the physical landscape for personal gain.

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AUTOMATION: CHALLENGE TO LABOR MOVEMENT

Everett M. Kassalow

Basic changes are taking place in the American economy and the American labor movement. They signify a crisis of historic proportions.

Among these changes I would include automation, the wider application of electronics to industry, the use of computers for programming, the development of new power sources, etc. To take full advantage of these changes, many large companies have undertaken the construction of new plants. The location of such new plants, generally away from the older, unionized areas, is posing serious problems. Moreover, we find that often these new plants tend to be smaller than plants built before or during World War II and this too has serious consequences for the industrial unions.

For the labor movement perhaps the most significant result of these developments has been its by-product effect on the labor force. The shift away from the old type of machine operations to automatic flows and processes has a profound effect on the demand for labor. More and more engineers, technicians, or computer clerks are being employed in American industry, and fewer and fewer production and maintenance workers are required.

I think the relationship between this increasing number of white-collar technical and professional workers and the trade union movement as it exists today, goes to the very heart of the future of organized labor in the United States. And it is not merely a question of numbers, for involved too is the social and political role of the trade union movement in American life.

Rise of the White-Collar Worker

It might be well to start with just a few figures on what has been happening in the work force. While it is not always possible to define neatly the white-collar and non-white-collar worker in the labor force, for our purposes I am going to use the broad definition currently employed by Government census-takers. They distinguish between the blue-collar workers (and this includes what are called "operatives," laborers and craftsmen) and white-collar workers. The

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latter includes clerical, professional and technical workers. From these categories all farm workers are excluded.

The significant trend in the American economy in the past decade or so has been the great increase in the proportion of white-collar workers. In 1947, for example, blue-collar workers numbered about 23.5 million as compared to approximately 20 million white-collar workers. By 1957 the number of white-collar workers actually surpassed the blue-collar force; the relative figures stood at about 25.5 million and 25 million.

While these overall gains by the white-collar force are striking, closer examination of the rates of change of some of the groups within the two broad categories is even more instructive. For example, between 1947 and 1957 professional and technical workers increased at a rate of 60.6 per cent and the clerical workers increased by 22.8 per cent; during the same period the number of factory operatives increased 4.4 per cent, while the number of laborers went up only 4.1 per cent. In manufacturing alone, non-production workers as a proportion of the total employed went from 16 per cent in 1947 to 25 per cent in 1957.

In fact, since 1952 or so, it has not been white-collar worker employment as a whole that has been increasing significantly in manufacturing; it is the technical-professional group that has been mounting in importance in manufacturing. Between 1952-1957, for example, the clerical, administrative and sales force in manufacturing rose only 7 per cent; while the professional technical and managerial group increased 60 per cent.

Engineers have been a growing factor in industry. I had occasion to visit a couple of metal working plants in Long Island recently. It almost seemed as though everyone was working on a drawing board. Those who weren't were sitting around smoking pipes in small discussion groups! Six or seven years ago, one of these plants had 5,000 production workers, 300 clerks and 500 engineers, scientists and technicians. Today, the respective figures are 1,850, 600, and 1,300. It is true that this is a plant almost completely committed to military production, in the missile field, but similar trends almost everywhere in the metal working industries are striking.

These trends have direct significance for our great industrial unions in many of the basic industries. Most of these industries still show a strong numerical edge for the blue-collar worker, but the rate of change is so rapid in favor of the white-collar worker, that in many of them we can almost predict the point at which the white-collar force will reach equality with the blue-collar force and then go on rapidly to exceed it.

In manufacturing it is more convenient to pose this same problem in terms of the production worker (and this includes production and maintenance in the usually accepted sense) as against the non-production worker (included in the latter are clerical, professional

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and technical workers). The Chemical Workers Union has noted that in 1947 less than one worker in four (24 per cent) in their industry was a non-production worker. By 1957 more than one out of every three workers (36 per cent) was classified as non-production worker. By 1968 the Chemical Workers Union estimates that the ratio will be one to one, and by 1980 the proportion will be three to one in favor of the non-production worker. This assumes that the rate of change of the past 10 years will be continued in the years ahead—an assumption which the Chemical Union thinks is a valid one.

This is only one industry, but there is similar evidence in other industries. I have recently had the opportunity to meet with some important locals in the electrical machinery and equipment industry, and I have been struck with the fact that at a number of plants the production and maintenance workers are actually outnumbered by the non-production force. This is largely a result of the great increase in the number of laboratory specialists, technicians, etc. The latter group in most cases is, of course, still unorganized.

The Challenge to Organized Labor

These striking changes in the labor force in and of themselves might not represent anything more than interesting economic data. If you set them against the background of organized labor's traditional concentration on the blue-collar work force, however, you begin to see the dangers for the American labor movement.

It has been estimated that about 85 per cent of the 17 or 18 million American trade unionists are in the blue-collar ranks. So long as the blue-collar force was clearly predominant in the American economy, the failure of the trade union movement to achieve more success in organizing the white-collar force did not seem too important. But given the trends of recent years and projections of the future composition of the labor force, the organization of the non-blue-collar worker takes on an almost life and death character for the American labor movement.

Lest this seem an exaggeration, consider a few facts. Assume that, by and large, the American trade union movement will continue to be confined to the blue-collar force. Under these circumstances, as the blue-collar force actually declines in the great industries, organized labor would be lucky to maintain its present membership level of 17 or 18 million over the next decade. Over this same period, however, the labor force itself would be expanding by 9 or 10 million.

By that time it would then be clear that organized labor had become a very diminished minority in the United States. Invariably too, it would also be a diminishing social force in American life. The labor movement would, for example, become increasingly vulnerable to the charge that it was a limited monopolistic force.

The labor movement must therefore break out of its blue-collar shell and succeed in organizing the mass of white-collar workers. It must do this to provide the kind of social and economic protection

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which white-collar workers along with all other workers in modern industrial society need. Again, it must do this if it is to be genuinely protective of the basic needs and interests of the blue-collar workers. For the labor movement in the United States must move forward and become more fully and more completely representative of the entire labor force, or it may be driven back and rendered quite ineffective in American life.

Technological Change Leads to Plant Shutdowns and Relocations

The great technological and social changes which we have been discussing here are complicating union life and union organization in other ways. The application of electronics and electrical devices, the introduction of automation, these and other developments are resulting in a rash of new plants all over the United States.

Company after company has decided that the older plants are not suited for the new processes and new machinery. Obsolete two and three-story structures are liquidated in favor of new one-level plants built in locations where real estate is cheaper. The desire to take advantage of new, expanding markets also plays a role here.

New plants in the electrical industry, the chemical industry, the paper industry, the automobile industry and many others are going up everywhere—often in areas where important industrial plants were hitherto unknown. Many of these new plants are smaller than the older manufacturing plants. These new plants are generally much cleaner, better ventilated and better organized than are plants built 20 or 30 years ago.

The effects of these superior physical conditions upon the workers in these new plants are sometimes startling, at least for union organizers who are trying to spread the gospel to them. Often the workers in these establishments are recruited from the surrounding rural areas. They are undergoing their first industrial experience. Work and life in one of these clean, modern well-run factories do not strike with the same force that hit the young farmer who came up to dirty tire plants of Akron or the hot, badly-ventilated assembly lines of Detroit 15, 20 or 25 years ago. Under these improved conditions the need for unionization, so far as the workers just entering industry today are concerned, is often less compelling and less immediate.

The very change in size, the trend towards smaller plants, complicates the task of reorganization. The sense of mass which characterized a River Rouge or an Akron Goodyear is no longer operating. The sheer physical necessity to counter the huge factory image of a River Rouge with a powerful workers' organization is not so immediately evident to workers in the smaller, new plants.

We have found in the past in the industrial field that generally it was easier to organize larger units, but these units seem to be disappearing. One large industrial union not long ago had more than two dozen locals with at least 10,000 members each. Today the same union finds it has only 14 such locals.

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Not only is it harder to organize smaller units but the task of servicing them becomes complicated. It may well be that some of the industrial unions will have to move more clearly in the direction of using amalgamated locals or some sort of a joint board set-up instead of the classic big plant local structure, which is still so typical in heavy manufacturing industry today.

New, More Efficient Plants Threaten Old Jobs

We are only now feeling some of the real sharp employment effects of the introduction of automation and related changes by many key corporations. We have already remarked that as the recent boom swept along, scores of new plants were opened in different parts of the country. So long as business remained at a high point, these new plants were merely adding to the general flow of production so that the displacement of workers at older plants in the same companies was often not too serious.

With the coming of the downturn, the real shakeout began. As demand fell, many companies found they could take care of all or nearly all of their markets merely by running their plants at or near full capacity. This permitted them, in turn, to shut down permanently many of the older plants.

Here is a good case in point. For years the U. S. Steel Company operated a blast furnace and a wire mill up in Worcester, Mass. Just a couple of years ago, U. S. Steel opened its giant new Fairless works near Philadelphia. As the recession moved in, U. S. Steel announced that although it was continuing to operate the Worcester wire plant, it was shutting down the blast furnace in that same location. In the future it would ship the steel to the wire plant from the Fairless works. So efficient is that new operation, that in spite of the tremendous costs of shipping the steel from Pennsylvania to Worcester, it was still more economical to do this than to continue the old furnaces in operation.

The UAW has been going through the same experience, as Chrysler, Ford and General Motors are all announcing the permanent shutdowns of many older and less efficient plants. It is only as we go through the wringer of a recession that the real employment effects of technological change are felt.

To help workers meet these changes as well as others of a similar nature which will take place in the future, we shall have to improve our severance pay plans and gain travel allowance funds from the big companies so that workers can move themselves and their families to new jobs.

We have much to learn from the experience of the railway unions. For over 20 years now they have been operating under an agreement which enables workers to move to new jobs as old ones are shut down. The company pays their moving expenses, makes up the difference between a fair price and a forced sale price on homes which workers may own, etc.

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In some ways we shall have to innovate major changes in the scope and nature of collective bargaining to come to grips with these issues. But it has generally been by changing the very nature of bargaining on social issues that the industrial unions have made their greatest contributions in American economic life. Such was the case, for example, with the pioneering efforts on private pensions and supplementary unemployment insurance.

By helping workers and communities adjust to technological change through collective bargaining, American unions will help to spark another major social advance in American life.

Legal Obstacles in Organizing Non-Blue-Collar Workers

As we come to organizing these growing white-collar professional and technical workers, we often find that there are legal obstacles before us. As you know, under the terms of the Taft-Hartley Act and even more under the interpretations given to it, professional, technical and white-collar workers have been given a clearcut right to except themselves from inclusion in a bargaining unit which includes production and maintenance workers. As you organize new plants and ask for an election, under most circumstances the National Labor Relations Board will refuse to set up over-all bargaining units which take in blue and non-blue-collar workers together.

Moreover, as technological changes take place at older bargaining sites where our unions are already established, employers are frequently maneuvering to reduce the size of existing units by claiming that many of the new jobs resulting from the technological changes are outside the definition of the old bargaining unit. In some instances employers claim that the new technical jobs carry with them supervisory responsibility which would also tear them out of the old bargaining unit.

This latter point can be extremely difficult. The telephone union, the Communication Workers of America, has been plagued for years by the fact that Bell Telephone has been successful in applying the classification "supervisory" to an unreasonably large number of workers, thereby reducing the economic strength of the CWA.

How are we going to meet this special legal and administrative problem? I wish I had the answer, but it may well be that nothing short of some reasonable amendment to the National Labor Relations Act is going to help us in this respect.

The Nature of Work Itself Is Changing

The new factories, the application of electronics, the spread of automation—all of these are bringing about profound changes in the very nature of work itself in many industries. I had occasion recently to review a study of a new seamless steel pipe mill that has been in production for a few years in Lorrain, Ohio. A Yale professor, Charles R. Walker, spent several years there studying the effects of

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the introduction of these great new machines which were making a veritable revolution in the manufacturing of seamless pipe.

It seems clear from Walker's study that the basic tasks steel workers engaged in the production of this pipe were performing had been radically transformed by this new process. In the old pipe mill at Lorrain the worker actively controlled and operated the machines producing the pipe. In the new mill he is a kind of watcher and maintenance man. He checks gauges, may have some responsibility for maintenance, etc.

His work, once basically manual, has now become basically mental. (Perhaps observational would be a better term to describe the shift in some industries.)

When asked to give his reaction to the new and old jobs, one worker expressed a preference for the old mill. "I like the jobs of the old mill better than the jobs of the new because you're in control. What you do determines how the pipe goes, you're on top of the machines. In the new mill the machines are on top of you."

While this is perhaps an extreme example, it has its parallels in many other factories. This shift from manual to mental tasks will inevitably lead to changes in workers' interests, needs and capabilities. In many situations retraining will be necessary and we have not even begun to define the role of the union in this area.

More generally I think that as a result of the shift in the nature of work many workers caught up in this new job environment may begin to take more of an interest in the production process as a whole. Who will reach out to meet these new interests of workers? Will it be management or the union?

In a vague kind of way some of management's so-called human relations programs in industry may be directed at some of these new needs and interests. To date, however, these programs have not been a serious challenge to labor and they haven't really been geared to the basic problems of workers in industry.

All of this may sound a bit philosophical and abstract. On the practical side the changing nature of work is going to make many incentive and piece-rate plans obsolete. Where these new processes and production techniques take over, the individual worker's responsibility for the rate of output so far as it relates to his own effort become inconsequential. At the best, companies will have to install group incentive systems if incentives are to apply at all. It seems more likely that these changes may lay the foundation for a shift from piece and hourly wages over to weekly and monthly pay scales.

The Challenge of Organization

Curiously enough then, not only is the number of white-collar professional and technical workers rising sharply, but even many of the blue-collar workers who are left are being transformed into a type of technician. I hasten to say that these new processes, of course,

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are not going forward in all industries, but the trend is there in the great basic sectors of the American economy.

Let me repeat, however, the great overriding problem is that of union organization of the white-collar and professional workers. In case anyone thinks this job of organization will take care of itself, let me remind you that the last great civil war in the American labor movement occurred because the movement itself was unable to adapt its structure sufficiently to meet the industrial workers in the great mass-production industries.

Seniority systems may be in for overhaul, too, at least as far as we draw in engineers and other professionals. Some organizers have found that the professional workers accept seniority on questions of layoff and recall, but seem to prefer a larger role for purely professional qualifications on matters of advancement.

I think we are now confronted once again with the job of adapting our organizations and our structures sufficiently and with enough imagination so that we can bring the white-collar and professional workers into the fold. If we don't succeed in this task of adaptation and modification, we may well find that some of the very industrial unions that were born out of the structural crisis of the thirties may be refusing to yield paper jurisdictional claims to still unorganized millions of non-blue-collar workers, 10 or 15 years from now.

How Are We Going to Do the Job

It is of course easier to see this problem than to prescribe for it. There are some things, however, that seem obvious. As they go into this new era the big industrial unions must make every effort to fit out their staffs with more organizers drawn from the professional and technical ranks. Organizers from these new ranks will better understand and be able to approach the groups whom we must reach.

While it is hard to lay down rigid rules, if I were a president of an industrial union I would establish it as a general practice that all future additions to the organizing staff should come from the white-collar professional and technical ranks. I am exaggerating a bit here, of course, but the general point holds. Unless we make a bold step we simply won't have the personnel to do the job in the next decade. One modification of this rule might be to see to it that some of our current organizers get special training on the needs and aspirations of white-collar and technical workers.

A colleague recently told me a story which vividly illustrates the lack of experience, for these new tasks, on the part of most of the current union organizing force. A large firm opened a new plant in the South. It had long bargained with two unions in the North, and when approached for recognition by these same unions in the South, contrary to usual southern employer practices, it agreed to a consent election—under certain conditions.

The plant employed 200 workers. Management agreed to an elec-

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tion for 170 production and maintenance workers, but insisted that the other 30 workers were technicians who could not be included in the regular bargaining unit.

My friend, research director for one of two cooperating unions, objected on the ground that the 30 workers in question were not "technicians," that they barely needed a high school education, at most, that they were not more skilled than the production workers, etc. The representative of the second union interjected, "let's not hold this election up. Besides we wouldn't know what to do with those types of workers, anyway!"

Special Importance of Engineers & Technicians

I stress this problem of organizing engineers and technicians for several reasons. First, I think that they are going to be even more difficult to organize than clerical and administrative white-collar groups. Secondly, for the large industrial unions, they may well become numerically more important than the readily "organizable" home office white-collar force. But even more important is the fact that in many ways this is a kind of newly emerging elite in American society. Organized labor will need these groups in its ranks not just for "numbers" reasons, but for leadership value as well. It has gotten so today that the very problem of communicating with and understanding the new world of technology is beyond an ordinary layman!

We have to be rethinking our structures in other ways. Right now we ought to be finding ways and means of giving white-collar technical and professional workers more direct representation on the bargaining committees in big industrial plants. I would lean over backwards to reserve places for these groups even though we may not have many of them in our bargaining units as yet.

By the same token, it may be necessary to organize special divisions or conferences within the big industrial unions so as to provide the white-collar workers with effective representation on policy matters at the international level.

I think we have a good deal to learn from our European brother unions so far as this question is concerned. The European trade union movement has been reasonably successful, for a long time now, in organizing white-collar professional and technical workers. I am sure they might have much to tell us of value as to what kinds of appeals should be made, what special problems they have encountered, etc.

In Europe to some extent, the professional needs of these groups, especially of the engineers and technicians, are more easily met because they are organized in separate engineering and technical unions. They maintain close relationships with production worker unions, but they have their own charters and officers.

We shall have to find some means of answering these professional interests. Offhand, however, I do not think that in the United States it will be possible to choose the road of building separate professional

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and technical unions for many of these workers. Economic power in America to a considerable extent flows along corporate and industrial lines. If white-collar professional and technical workers are to be effectively organized, they must somehow be grouped together in the great institution which industrial workers have already established to offset the great centers of corporate power—namely the powerful industrial unions in the steel, auto, rubber, oil, textile and other fields.*

This only means that from the point of view of structure our task is probably even more difficult than that of the Europeans. Yet I do not underestimate what we can probably learn from them.

Of course we shall also face the task of strengthening the white-collar and professional unions who will represent these groups of workers who are employed outside the basic industries and large corporations.

Finally, I also want to mention that we must draw upon the experience of our own labor movement. For although the great majority of AFL-CIO members are to be found in the blue-collar field, some of our affiliates have succeeded in organizing numbers of white-collar and professional types of workers. Surely we have a great deal to learn from the Communication Workers of America who have made such notable progress in the telephone field. The same is true of the American Radio Association, the Airline Pilots, the Office and Professional Workers and others. There are also important lessons in those few companies where even the large industrial unions have succeeded in organizing non-blue-collar groups. We ought to be able to pool the experience of these unions so that the entire labor movement can draw upon it in the years ahead.

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All of these problems, the changing nature of industry, work and the labor forces will tax to the utmost the abilities and capacities of the American trade union movement in the next decade and more. It will call for a greater sense of flexibility and a broader vision than ever before. But these are problems which must be solved if the labor movement is to continue to progress socially in the United States.

* The Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO has just organized a Permanent Conference on the Problem of Professional and Technical Workers. It will try, by this device, to give professional and technical workers "a kind of professional identification and service which outruns the capacity of a single union to provide," in some cases, at least.

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HOSPITAL WORKERS KNOCK AT THE DOOR

Dan Wakefield

Pinned on the basement walls of a temporary union headquarters during New York's hospital strike last spring was a two-page, full color advertisement torn from *Life* magazine. It showed a gentleman of the New Leisure stretched in a hammock, drinking a pink frothy mixture that appeared to be an ice cream soda. His face reflected such ecstatic contentment that a casual observer might wonder if there weren't perhaps a couple of jiggers of gin in the mixture. Below the ad, printed in ink on a piece of scrap paper were the words, "We want this life too!"

Around the room on folding chairs sat a sprinkling of the aspirants to membership in the advertised affluent society; the most underpaid and poorly benefitted workers in the richest city of the richest nation of the world. They were mostly Negroes and Puerto Ricans, their ages ranging from the teens to a time at which the counting of years is superfluous, the faces beaten and drawn beyond any other category but Old. They gathered for six weeks in basement rooms and rented halls near the hospitals that employed them, fanning themselves against the heat and the boredom, rising up to shuffle into place on the picket lines, coming periodically back to strike headquarters to claim the bread and canned food that union sympathizers contributed during the seige.

The plight of these several thousand striking workers, from the ranks of the 30,000 employees who do the laundry, kitchen, maintenance, service, and laboratory work in New York's 81 "voluntary" hospitals (supported mainly by charity) drew both sympathy and shock from most of the city's citizens, especially union members, and the local union leaders who like to refer to New York as a "labor city." These striking workers, organized by Local 1199 of the Retail Drug Employees Unions (an affiliate of the RWDSU) commonly averaged $34 a week, without unemployment and disability benefits, without seniority, without union representation, and in some cases, with a six-day week. Because the voluntary hospitals (the other categories are proprietary hospitals, run privately and for profit, and city and state hospitals) are non-profit institutions, supported largely by charity, they are exempt from state labor laws and also from the Taft-Hartley law. In an era when labor demands are centered more and more on the shorter week and special benefits, and blue collar workers increasingly are faced with the split-level problems of their white collar brothers, the sudden "discovery" of the forgotten hospital workers provided a shot in the arm and a common, uncontroversial cause to the recently merged New York labor council, which got behind the

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strikers with unanimous aid and enthusiasm. As one observer of the labor scene described the strike, "This is the most clearcut social issue since the revolt of the gladiators."

Few people disagreed with that sentiment, and a no less sober voice than that of a Justice of the New York State Supreme Court told the hospital management on June 12 that their refusal to recognize the union was "an echo of the nineteenth century." And yet, despite what seemed a majority of support from public opinion, as represented by leading citizens who urged that the union be recognized, and despite the combined efforts of the merged union strength of this "labor city," the settlement that ended the strike after six weeks was anything but clear-cut. To the end, the hospital management refused to grant outright recognition to the union, and the settlement provided principally for the less than revolutionary concessions of raising wages to at least a minimum of $1 an hour, providing for impartial grievance machinery and arbitration through outside representatives of the workers' choosing, and a review board of hospital and court-appointed members which will take up requests for improved standards in the future. After a summer of working under these conditions, the union is far from satisfied.

ALTHOUGH WAGES have gone up in the seven hospitals that were struck, the majority of the 18 hospitals are going on much as they have in the past. Some are still paying less than $1 an hour. Local 1199 president Leon J. Davis said in September that although the Hospital Association agreed in a body to the settlement, its machinery and provisions are only being put into effect in the still small number of hospitals where workers are organized. In those that are abiding by the terms of the settlement, Davis said that "there is no way for the union to resolve anything directly with management. The machinery for arbitration is unwieldy and it is an impractical way of handling labor relations."

Davis claims that the union has grown since the strike ended, and now has roughly 5,000 members in the hospitals. It is maintaining 12 organizers who are working to enlarge and solidify the organizations that exist already and start new ones in the still unorganized hospitals. "There is a real desire on the part of these workers to build a union," Davis said.

Throughout the strike, the workers' meetings were alive with the kind of militant spirit that has rarely been seen in labor since the thirties—and indeed, the issues involved in a strike have rarely been so basic since then. Typically revealing of the spirit of the striking workers was the meeting they held after roughly three weeks on strike, to vote on the first proposals of settlement offered by the Hospital Association.

The meeting was held on the stifling night of May 20 in the ballroom of the Hotel Diplomat, a high-ceilinged cavern done in nickelodeon baroque, with gilded cherubs and scarlet draperies. Into it were packed nearly 2,000 strikers (double the number alleged by the hospitals to be on strike at the time) and they sat in silence that was broken increasingly by jeers and catcalls as Harry Van Arsdale, president of the New York merged labor council, read the "Hospital Benefit Plan" which had been submitted by management as a substitute for unionization. It is hard to think that the men who wrote it would have had the guts to read it before the audience of strik-

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ing workers. It provided for "improvement in literary and cultural pursuits," instructions for the workers in "the rules and obligations of citizenship in a free democracy," a contribution of $100,000 from the United Hospital Fund for scholarship assistance to workers and their children, and other amenities which were as far removed from the needs and desires of a man who makes $32 a week as the promise of membership in the Racquet Club. The plan offered a wage increase of $2 a week. There was general laughter, and it was not pleasant laughter.

When the votes on the proposal were cast and being counted (it was voted down overwhelmingly), the floor was opened to strikers who wanted to say a word or so to their fellow workers. Within a few moments, the line to the microphone was jammed. A worker from Brooklyn Jewish Hospital pointed out that if the hospitals meant what they said, they wouldn't be afraid of having a union. He had already had experience with hospital promises: "I was on a grievance committee the hospital set up once and when we went in to tell them our grievances, they showed us a movie."

A Puerto Rican worker from Beth David came to the mike to say, simply: *"Estados Todos Unidos."*

A worker from Brooklyn Jewish said, "We'll walk till our shoes wear out."

A social worker arose to say, "Don't let them tell you it's only non-professional workers on strike. Many professional people are out, and we're proud to be with you."

A Negro lady who barely reached the mike stood on her toes and said in a high, joyous voice: "Brothers and Sisters—Hallelujah!"

They roared back, "Hallelujah."

THEY WERE brothers and sisters of poverty, and for the most part of color—as well as of a union—and the special shame of the strike was that their battle had to be waged against the wealthy who claim to be their benefactors as well as their bosses. The difference between the hospital bosses and the bosses of the past lay not in their proclamations of anti-union sentiment (the hospital bosses were as adamant against a union as were the bosses in the days of the Knights of Labor) but in their personal backgrounds and records. Rather than the profiteering bosses of old who were fighting the union in order to grind more pennies from the sweat of their workers, these were volunteer citizens helping to operate non-profit medical institutions for the welfare of the community. Many of them are philanthropists, humanitarians, and, in many cases, "Liberals." The affiliations of a smattering of the members of the boards of directors of the seven struck hospitals give some indication of the kind of men who were fighting the right of their workers to organize: Benjamin Buttenweiser (Lenox Hill Hospital), National Urban League, trustee of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropic Societies, American Jewish Committee, Foreign Policy Association; David N. Edelstein (Beth Israel Hospital), author of *The History and Scope of the Fair Labor Standards Act,* U.S. District Judge; James Felt (Mt. Sinai Hospital), past president of the Urban League of New York, past vice president of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, director of the Henry Street Settlement Children's Aid Society; Gustave R. Rosenberg (Beth David Hospital), Grand Street Boys Association, National Democratic Club, Mary Mann Philanthropic League, New York Board

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of Higher Education; Harry Pearlman (Brooklyn Jewish Hospital), trustee of Brandeis University, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.

The list could stretch far beyond this, and it is not the intention here to slight any of the other hospital board members with equal or even superior records of good works. It is rather to illustrate the curious fact that the men whose proclamations on unionism sounded like Henry Ford in the battle of Willow Run are past presidents of the Urban league, authors of books on Fair Labor Practices, directors of Settlement Houses, Boys Clubs, and Philanthropic Leagues. They are men who build gymnasiums for underprivileged kids and then pay their parents $32 a week and scream bloody murder when they try to join a union. Evidently they saw no discrepancy between their past actions of philanthropy and humanitarianism and their battle to keep the hospital workers—many of whom earn so little that they hold down full-time jobs and still have to have supplementary relief from the city—from choosing a bona fide union to represent them.

THE PIOUS proclamation on the part of management that hospitals were "different" and unions would be detrimental to their proper functioning—perhaps even create danger to the lives of the patients—was ridiculous from the start. The city-supported hospitals have been organized for a number of years, and the voluntary Maimonides hospital, organized for several years under Local 1199, as well as Montefiore, which was organized by that union the first of this year, have gone on about their business without any lack of efficiency or danger to patients since recognizing the union. In fact, Dr. J. A. Katzive, executive director of Maimonides hospital, stated in an interview in the *Wall Street Journal* that in his experience with the union "things have been entirely satisfactory." In the same article, Ray Emberg, president of the American Hospital Association and director of the University of Minnesota hospital was quoted as saying, "The calibre of the workers has improved since the union came in. The union gave security and we got more stable people."

Yet the representatives of the hospital boards never ceased to act as if the coming of the unions was comparable to the coming of the Black Plague. Their rage and fervor in fighting the union was a strange thing to behold from men who are philanthropists. When underpaid workers at several of the hospitals were kicked out of hospital-owned rooming houses because they had gone on strike, Mr. Benjamin Buttenweiser, of the National Urban League, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and the American Jewish Committee, was asked by the press to comment on the evictions. He said it was a "practical step."

Roughly 80 per cent of the 30,000 workers of New York's voluntary hospitals are Negroes and Puerto Ricans, and in the first week of the strike, Harry Van Arsdale said that the withholding of union recognition to these workers was a "slap at an abused minority." Mr. Buttenweiser's answer was: "How ridiculous can you get?"

It is hard to imagine that anyone who followed the strike very closely or attended any of the workers' meetings could have found the charge ridiculous. At the last meeting of the strike, when the workers accepted the hospital settlement, one of the New York union leaders got up to say that

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one result of the strike was the unity that the workers had gained—not only with each other but with officials and members of other unions. He said he imagined that this was the first time many of the people in the audience who were Negroes or Puerto Ricans had ever really met and worked in a common cause side by side with white people. The audience clapped and cheered in affirmation, and there were shouts of "Yes, yes."

Another factor that increased the bitterness of the strike was that it pitted the poorest people of the city against the richest people. The hospital directors have pointed out the complex financial burdens of the institutions, and said that the whole thing had to do with the economics of modern medicine, rather than the issues of rich people and poor people, colored people and white people. The economics are of course at the heart of what set things off, but once set off, the issues were far more deep and personal than questions of Blue Cross rates and patient payment. The several bitter scuffles that broke out among strikers and policemen sprang from deeper passions. One of the biggest of the outbreaks occurred when a class of medical students marched in a parade up Fifth Avene past the Mt. Sinai Hospital and workers, with their picket signs proclaiming the desire of a decent life, joined in the lines of march and had to be torn away by policemen.

How messy and disturbing it is when the poor people spoil our parades and demand their own place in the affluent society the magazines tell them they live in. Perhaps one of the many things the strike of the hospital workers proved is that the clean, conscience-easing rites of professional Charity are no substitutes for the more difficult and awkward procedures of allowing the poor to join together and speak and act for what they need. The term used to describe the settlement that the hospital directors finally agreed to was "backdoor recognition" of the union. Well, they are back there, and they aren't going away. Soon they will be at the front door, asking to be let in, and not even Charity will be able to shut them out.

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THE RACKET-RIDDEN LONGSHOREMEN

Daniel Bell

Rimmed off from the rest of the city by a steel-ribbed highway and a wall of bulkhead sheds is the New York waterfront, an atavistic world more redolent of the brawling money-grubbing of the nineteenth century than the smooth-mannered business transactions of the twentieth. Cross the shadow line and you are in a rough, racket-ridden frontier domain, ruled by the bull-like figure of the "shaping boss." Here brawn and muscle, sustained where necessary by baling hook and knife, enforce discipline among a motley group of Italian immigrants, Slavic and Negro workers, and a restless and grumbling group of Irish. Here one finds kickbacks, loansharking, petty extortion, theft and pilferage—and murder—a commonplace of longshore life. Many of the docks are controlled directly or indirectly by mobsters who dominate the pier union local, parcel out the jobs and run the rackets. The rank-and-file, cynical about any settlement by the leadership of the union, sometimes took the only course it knew, i.e. of "voting with its feet," a wildcat strike; but then, ironically, only with the backing of dissident racket leaders who used the occasion to challenge the entrenched mobs. In the decade after the war—in part because of this "factionalism," in part because of ethnic antagonisms—every major collective bargaining agreement between the shipping companies and the longshore union was repudiated by the men.

Why this racket domination has persisted is the subject of a broader paper. The answer, briefly, involves an understanding of the economics of the industry, the peculiar political relationships between the union and the urban Democratic party machine in the port cities, the ethnic patterns within the longshoremen groups, the psychology of the longshoremen as an "isolated mass" suspicious of the urban community around them, and the "Chinese warlord" structure of the union itself. But these elements only provide the setting. What is distinctive, and has to be understood, is the role of the industrial racketeer.

I make a distinction between corruption and industrial racketeering. Corruption involves spoliation of union funds, pay-offs, bribes, shakedowns, etc. It is a form of abuse of office or extortion from others, for the personal gain of the malefactor. If the cost is not too high, or can be passed along easily to others as in the building trades, it becomes an accepted part of the way of doing business; if too exorbitant it may lead to a demand for government intervention. Industrial racke-

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teering, however, performs the function—at a high price—which other agencies cannot do, of stabilizing a chaotic market and establishing an order and structure in the industry. Industrial racketeering can exist only in a specific type of economic market. It does not exist in steel, auto, chemical, rubber, etc., where a few giant firms, acting in oligopolistic fashion, establish an ordered price structure in the industry. It has existed in small-unit size, highly competitive, local product markets, such as trucking, garment, baking, cleaning, and dyeing, where no single force other than the industrial racketeer was strong enough to stabilize the industry. This was especially true in the 1920s when industrial racketeering flourished. In the early 1930s, legalized price-fixing by the New Deal undercut the role of the industrial racketeer. What hitherto had been a quasi-economic but necessary function now became outright and unnecessary extortion. Following the demise of the N.R.A., the trade unions in most of these fields were strong enough to take over the role of stabilizing and policing the industry for legitimate ends. On the New York waterfront, the racket pattern continued. Why?

It is the thesis of this paper that the distinctive economic matrix of the port shaped a pattern of accommodation between the shippers and the racketeers and led to the continuation of the system. Without those economic requirements, the system would go under. In our fascination these days with power and manipulation, we often ignore the economic fulcrum underneath. The political interventions of the State and Federal agencies and of the AFL in the New York waterfront situation were based on the belief that by changing the power relations in the longshore union, the conditions which gave rise to racketeering might be eliminated. Certainly this was the justification for the extraordinary intervention by the Eisenhower and Dewey administrations in the waterfront strikes in 1955 and 1956 although the Republicans had previously proclaimed that government should keep its hands off any labor dispute. The political effort failed. Yet if it had succeeded, it is doubtful if the pattern of racketeering would have been upset, for without the reshaping and rationalization of the "technological" environment (using the word in its broadest sense to cover ecological, technological and economic aspects of operations), the conditions which gave rise to racketeering would persist.

The Economic Fulcrum

It is a schoolboy's maxim that New York owes its commanding position as the largest city in the United States to its magnificent port. In the growing commerce of the country, no other city could match its assets: wide and deep channels and ice-free and rarely foggy waters which allowed great freighters to sail a few miles inland into a set of vast natural harbors, into protected estuaries curving into the bays and into long, navigable rivers, which offered numerous and accessible wharfs. It was inevitable, thus, that shipping would come

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to New York. By the turn of the century, New York had become the greatest concentration point of economic and social power in the U.S. The spatial counterpoint of downtown financial skyscraper and squat west side bulkhead became the topographical symbol of this reciprocal genuflection of finance and commerce.

Although the New York harbor curves in a sinuous perimeter of 700 miles, the hub of the port is the four to five miles of piers and landings along the west side of Manhattan. Here the ocean-going vessels dock. Here the tremendous amount of cargo and produce which is consumed in the city, or shipped inland, and the cargo sent from the industrial east for export abroad are loaded and unloaded. But Manhattan is an island, and its handicaps are unique. Although much of the general cargo tonnage is handled on narrow Manhattan, the island does not have a single steamship pier with direct track connection to a trunk line railroad. Rail freight has to be delivered to or taken from the ships by lighters which float across the harbor or by truck. But the width of the slips between piers is insufficient both for the berthing of ocean-going freighters and the squat lighters which hover alongside the ships to unload or deliver the bulk cargo. Hence, serious congestion and delay create costly shifting expenses. And the narrowness of the piers themselves works havoc on the dock for the trucks. Only a small percentage of New York's piers can accommodate the 40 foot mammoth trucks which carry cargo, so that for the most part freight must be handled in the choked marginal streets outside the piers. Congestion is so fierce and waiting time so high that the large motor carriers publish penalty rates for deliveries to steamship piers within the metropolitan area.

As a result of these antiquated facilities, shore handling costs, which once were a minor factor in the operation of a boat, in most instances began to exceed the combined costs of vessel depreciation, crew's wages, insurance, supplies, overhead, maintenance, and fuel oil. The biggest single shore expense became longshoring, which accounted for 50 per cent of the ship's total expense in moving cargo. If a shipping company was to have a profitable run, it needed a quick "turn-around," i.e., speedy unloading and loading, and a quick get-away. And for this, it needed a ready and compliant labor force.

The Shape of the Labor Supply

Shipping, by custom, is a "casual" operation. The industry itself is seasonal and cyclical, the volume of business subject to wars, political blackouts of trade routes, etc. Individual schedules are subject to the vagaries of weather, port delays, the kind of bulk consignments, etc. The demand for labor fluctuates widely, depending upon the number of ships in port. To get a quick "turn-around" the steamship company wants an over-supply of labor which can be readily available, will work long and continuous hours a few feverish days in the week, and will wait patiently over the idle stretches until the

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next ship comes. Because their needs are irregular, most of the shipping companies do not hire longshoremen directly, but contract with stevedoring concerns on a tonnage basis for the loading and unloading of their ships. Approximately sixty such stevedoring concerns hire all dock labor, and they, together with the shipping lines, constitute the New York Shipping Association which negotiates with the union on wages and working conditions.

Historically, the way of maintaining the necessary over-supply was an "open shape," i.e., encouraging all kinds of transients to congregate at the dock and picking the men on a gypsy basis. For a cab driver, an idle teamster—and even a city fireman or policeman off duty!—the system was an easy way to pick up a few extra dollars, particularly on weekends or evenings, when overtime rates prevailed. Thousands of such workers put in small and irregular amounts of time on the docks. But for thousands of workers who sought regular livelihood the conditions of an open shape, and the favoritism it encouraged, were intolerable.

During World War II, because of the manpower shortage, and for reasons of security, the open shape, i.e., picking a group at random, was modified by the creation of steady or regular gangs who remained intact and had first crack at jobs on the gang's regular pier. The system of regular gangs did allow new solidarities to form. And it is significant that strikes erupted on the New York waterfront after the war—there were none in the twenties and thirties and during the war —only when some form of regularized employment had arisen. But only a minority of piers maintained regular gangs.

The shape-up obviously gave the shipping companies the floating labor force they needed. In 1950, about 40,000 men, regular workers and transients, worked on the piers. Actually, the "full-time" longshore force was between 16,000 to 20,000 men; the rest were floaters. Of the regular group, only between five to eight per cent obtained fifty weeks of work a year. Between twenty and twenty-five per cent worked more than thirty weeks. The simplest evidence, however, of the meaning of the low and unstable income status of a New York longshoreman is that banks and finance companies do not make personal loans to dock workers nor are they accepted, usually, as regular low-income tenants in public or private housing projects.

The Padrone and the Peons

The system of the shape tended to emphasize the uncertainties and insecurities of the job. Under a brawny leader, pier cliques grew up to assure the pick of the jobs for themselves. Rackets multiplied: by possessing two social security cards a man could work a minimum number of hours on one card and then collect insurance while working regularly on the other. Or the surplus work cards were used to pad the payroll by adding a fictitious work gang to the roster, and the extra money was divided by the hiring boss, the payroll

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clerk, and the clique. This type of payroll padding, as well as loan-sharking and any number of other parasitic practices, was possible because of the "brass check,"* a system which had died out almost everywhere else at that time in U.S. industry. The worker collected his pay by turning in the brass check, but so could anyone else who had the check. Longshoremen who went broke before pay day, or needed money in a hurry to pay bills, sold their checks for a percentage of their value. The stevedoring companies blinked at the padding because the sums were petty beside the vaster benefits obtained by a pliant hiring boss who would drive the men for greater productivity.

The key man on the dock was the hiring or "shaping" boss. Although the hiring boss was, in fact, a foreman, and thus a management representative, all the hiring bosses were members of the International Longshoremen's Association, and their choice was dictated by the local union; in few cases could a steamship or stevedore company name a hiring boss. As a key patronage job, the choice fell to the union officer who traded it to a friend.

It was quite common for the hiring bosses on many of the piers to possess criminal records. A cynical reason was supplied by an official of a large stevedoring concern who stated:

> . . . If I have a choice of hiring a tough ex-convict or a man without a criminal record I am more inclined to take the ex-con. Know why? Because if he is in a boss job he'll keep the men in line and get the maximum work out of them. They would be afraid of him.

Why did the union tolerate these conditions? Stated more simply, why didn't the International Longshoremen's Association act like a union? The classic pattern of American unionism, its *raison d'etre,* is *job control.* Job control means limiting the number of jobs, or the number of men seeking jobs, and a defined system of seniority, in order to assure equity and security in the title to the job. Few unions in the United States encourage cutthroat competition among men for jobs, or tolerate a condition of job insecurity. The ILA did.

The answer was obvious long ago. Msgr. Swanstrom, a Catholic priest who in 1939 published a detailed study entitled "The Waterfront Labor Problem," wrote: "Merely as a statement of fact, [the union's] officers and delegates have a vested interest in keeping the membership at a high level." By encouraging a surplus of labor, the union accommodated the companies; by controlling the shape-up, the union leadership had an effective club over the men.

Actually, the International Longshoremen's Association has been less a trade union than a collection of Chinese warlords, each ruling a great or small province. In the New York region there were about 70-odd locals, some craft and others geographically based, whose mem-

* An old system of paying unskilled labor. A worker was given a brass check for each day worked, and these checks were turned in at the end of the week for cash. Thus bookkeeping was minimized and few records had to be kept. Since prostitutes were once also paid in this manner, the term, particularly among the Wobblies, became one of contempt and was used so by Upton Sinclair as the title of a book on the "kept" press.

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berships ranged from ten to fifteen hundred members each. Roughly thirty of these were longshore locals which normally had geographical jurisdiction over one or a small group of adjacent piers.*

Within a local, the small membership and the "face-to-face" contact made it possible for small cliques to gain and "enforce" control. A tight machine of loyal followers was built up through the handing out of regular jobs to a favored few. The rest of the membership was cowed by the discriminatory threats of loss of job. In the postwar years when for the first time some records were kept, only seven locals, it was shown, held regular elections by secret ballot. The others voted openly or not at all.

In the New York area, the longshore locals were grouped into a District Council which dealt with the problems of the longshoremen, checkers, cargo repairmen, maintenance men, etc. But the area itself was politically gerrymandered. By design there were far too many longshore locals with a paper membership. Since all actions of any consequence had to be approved by the District Council, dissident locals were easily outvoted.

The Racket Fulcrum

On the waterfront, control of a union local means much more than the ordinary prizes of political victory. Control of a union local meant control of a pier, and control of a pier meant control of the host of rackets that are spawned on the docks. A victorious clique had a number of concessions it could parcel out. These included bookmaking, loansharking, kickbacks for jobs, etc. Hence, the often bitter struggles for control, and the iron suppression of opposition once in power.

But the biggest prize of all was the "loading racket." Control of "loading" and its lucrative revenues was the major prize over which the bloody pier wars were fought on the New York docks for thirty years. The "loading racket" was the key to criminal infiltration and baronial domination of sections of the ILA, and its intricate political and economic accommodations between the power elements in the New York waterfront history reveals all the facets.

Public loading arose out of a peculiar situation. When the steamship companies deposited a consignment from the ship onto the pier shed floor they took no further responsibility for it. A trucker who arrived to pick up the consignment had to lift the shipment onto the truck himself or get some help. Public loading was simply the act of employing a helper to take the stack of goods stored in the pier shed, and lift it manually or mechanically with a forktruck from the floor of the dock to the tailgate of the waiting truck. A lift of about

* The others are craft locals of carpenters, clerks, and checkers, and a large, miscellaneous collection of locals of lumberyard workers, warehousemen, oil handlers, tugboat operators, grain elevator workers, ship caulkers, captains of deck scows, and others with such fancy titles as "Steamship Horse and Cattle Fitters, Grain Ceilers and Marine Carpenters," "Sugar Samplers," "Grain Trimmers," "Boom Testing and Rigging Testing" workers, etc.

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a foot and a half. That was all.* Yet, for the privilege of controlling the loading "concessions" on different piers, more than a score of men were murdered, prominent shipping executives cowed, entire union locals taken over by mobsters, and city officials persuaded to look the other way. How come?

"Time," said Benjamin Franklin, "is money." Time is the answer. During World War I the number of vehicles trucking freight to and from the docks increased enormously. The cobbled streets along the waterfront right-of-way had not been built for such traffic. Nor were the city's narrow piers. The long lines piled up. The most expensive cost item in trucking became waiting time. Rather than pay a driver's helper for snoozing on the truck the practice arose of sending a driver alone to the pier and having him hire a loader as he needed one from among the "shenangos" or barflies at the nearby saloon.

Gradually, through a process of squatters' rights, various individuals began to assert a monopoly on loading at each pier. At first they offered a service; later they began to enforce compulsory service; and, in classic monopoly fashion, they began to charge, literally, all that the traffic would bear. (Truckers in a special hurry could pay a "hurry-up" fee and go to the head of the line.) So the tollgate was established. Whether you needed a loader or not, you had to pay for the service, and on each ton of goods an extra tax was levied. So the industrial racketeer becomes established; he finds a strategic juncture and proceeds to occupy this point of vantage to his own profit.

When you have a good thing, said the devil, you organize it. And many men tried. "They hold their piers through a process of conquest and military occupation," wrote Alva Johnston in a New York *Tribune* series on loading in 1931. A gangster's crown, however, is like the Golden Bough of the priests of Nemi. One could succeed to the title of king only by slaying his predecessor. In the twenties a dozen members of the waterfront dynasty succeeded one another in rapid fashion.†

In the mid-thirties, however, peace was established. The various loading bosses in the west side piers pooled their efforts and formed an organization known as Varick Enterprises, Inc. which served as a central collection agency and strong-arm operation for the mobsters. The organization had so efficient an intelligence service that it kept accurate tabs on every shipment, whether by rail or water, arriving in the city. Various loaders, operating through the agency, would go to the terminals, check on weights and names of truckers and consignees,

* The public loader, therefore, differed from the longshoremen who were hired by the stevedoring companies to load and unload ships. Public loaders were in origin roughly akin to those public porters at rail stations who are not allowed through the train gate. They were, in effect, independent, enterprising "middlemen" between the stevedoring operation and the trucker.

† The shortest waterfront reign was that of Eddie McGuire who ruled for five minutes. When the leadership was vacant in 1928 the pier leaders met on the Colombian pier and shook dice for the leadership. Eddie won. Five minutes later everybody left the pier but Eddie. A watchman found him dead with five bullets in his body.

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and issue a loading ticket—whether any services were performed or not—setting forth the amount of the charge. Then the collectors made their rounds. If payment was refused, Varick, through its union contacts, could provoke a slowdown or threaten a reluctant shipper with a strike.

Varick Enterprises was so strong that at one time it helped elect Michael J. Kennedy a leader of Tammany Hall. It dissolved in the mid-forties when the District Attorney's office began to investigate its operations. The boss loaders then reverted to the previous policy of controlling territories on an independent basis.

The career of John "Cockeye" Dunn illustrates the ripe rewards and the casual murders that attended the growth of the loading rackets. In 1936, Dunn, a man who had served time in two reformatories and a stretch in Sing Sing, turned to the waterfront. In short order, by murdering two men and wounding another, Dunn blasted his way into control of loading on Pier 59. In November 1936, he and his lieutenants formed a "workers committee" and obtained from the ILA a charter for a union local known as the Terminal Checkers and Platform Men, Local 1346-2. With this local, Dunn planned to control loading not only at the piers, but in the inland freight terminals as well. Dunn did not organize workers; he simply went to the employers, "negotiated" a contract, and then told the freight handlers they belonged to his union. The following year, Dunn extended his activities. He dropped his ILA charter and obtained from the national AFL three federal charters under the name of Motor and Bus Terminal Checkers, Platform and Office Workers. The charters were for New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and Dunn made himself business agent and vice president of the New York local while his hired slugger, Andrew "Squint" Sheridan, became organizer for the Jersey local. Through these locals, Dunn became a power in the trucking industry, at the same time maintaining control over a number of piers.

Shortly after the war, in May 1946, a man named Anthony Hintz was designated as hiring boss on Pier 51. Hintz refused to play ball with Dunn and held out for months despite efforts at intimidation. On January 8, 1947, as Hintz started down the stairway of his house to go to the dock, three men came up, and one pumped six bullets into him. For three days Hintz wavered on the edge of death; then, while his life was ebbing away, he told police, "Dunn shot me." The reason was simple. As Squint Sheridan, Dunn's partner, told the police: "To control a pier you've got to control the loading . . . Andy [Hintz] was a boss loader"—and he stood in the way. The profits of loading from one pier alone, said Sheridan, were about $900 a week.

For a while it seemed as if Dunn would talk and name others connected with the loading racket. In the end, however, he remained silent, and Dunn and Sheridan went to the chair in July 1949.

In the postwar years, public loading was grudgingly given a garb of legality and became institutionalized. The process started in-

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congruously when loading shakedowns began to reach outrageous heights. The truckers demanded that the shipping lines, who were the pier lessees, or their stevedoring agents, take over the loading. This would have meant the establishment of regular charges by the shipping companies, and the end of the racket. But the shipping companies refused. Their interest was in a quick turn-around of their ships, and for this they needed a larger labor supply and a tractable labor force. For this, they needed a "cooperative" union local; and by this time, the locals were controlled by the racketeers. Moreover, by the ability to create delay, by slowdown or strike, the pier cliques were able to exert crippling leverage upon the companies. For this reason, it paid the companies to play ball and buy off the mobsters. The shipping companies refused to handle the loading. The truckers did not want to handle loading either. The costs could easily be passed along to the public. What they objected to was the arbitrary and erratic setting of rates which made it difficult to rationalize the extra charges to their customers. All they wanted was stability and order.

ILA president, Joe Ryan, hastily called a conference between the public loaders and truckers. The truckers agreed, in return for a contract setting uniform loading rates, that they would surrender the right to do the loading themselves. The public loaders, though in effect independent contractors, became officially members of the longshore union, in the Port Loaders Council of the ILA. As a union, the loaders negotiated loading rates with the truckmen's association. Loading in New York had become "legitimatized."

The beauty of "loading" was that it provided a bland legal mask for extraordinary gain on almost no investment, other than muscle men for intimidation, and that it provided a lucrative income, as regular as death and taxes, and subject only to the normal vagaries of the business cycle.

The real significance of the racket, for sociological investigation, is that "loading" is to be found *only* on the New York waterfront. There was never a loading racket in San Francisco, in New Orleans, in Baltimore or Philadelphia—the other major maritime ports in the U.S. There are many indigenous or historical factors to account for this lack, but the key fact is that the *spatial* arrangements of these other ports is such that loading never had a "functional" significance. In all these ports, other than New York, there are direct railroad connections to the piers, so transfer of cargoes is easily and quickly accomplished; nor is there in these ports the congested and choking narrow street patterns which in New York forced the trucks to wait, piled up "time charges," or made for off-pier loading. Here is where a difference in the "economic matrix" helps in part to explain the presence or absence of racketeering.

Reform Without Change

In September 1953, the AFL expelled the ILA and chartered a new union in its stead. And the states of New York and New Jersey

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set up a bi-state waterfront commission with broad regulatory powers over the longshoremen, the loaders, and the stevedoring concerns. In effect, the harbor was declared a quasi-utility and a set of controls, as stringent as any imposed on an industry, was established. All pier superintendents and hiring bosses had to obtain licenses, and no ex-convict could be employed in these jobs unless he could prove good conduct over the previous five years. All longshoremen had to register. To maintain registration, a longshoreman had to work steadily, or, failing to work nine months, lose his registration. In this fashion, the Commission sought to cut the supply of casual or "week-end" laborers, who by bribing hiring bosses for the lucrative evening and week-end premium pay hours had contributed to waterfront disorganization. Ex-convicts were barred from registration unless they obtained clearance from the Commission. The shape-up, as such, was abolished, and replaced by employment centers. The stevedoring concerns still maintained control over hiring, however, but they could only employ registered longshoremen. Compulsory public loading was outlawed. Either the steamship companies could provide loaders, or the teamsters could employ their own men.

While these moves were taking place, the collective bargaining contract between the shippers and the old ILA had expired. Desperately striving to win a new contract, the old ILA called a strike which effectively shut down the east coast ports. In response to various pressures, President Eisenhower set up a Board of Inquiry preliminary to obtaining a Taft-Hartley injunction. The board skirted the issue which it had been called upon to judge. In effect, the question of the injunction was left squarely up to the Administration. And the Administration, guided by Governor Dewey's office, in turn left the issue up to the AFL! So close was the cooperation between the AFL and the state officials that if the AFL had opposed a Taft-Hartley injunction, none would have been issued.

The NLRB, fearful that the expiration of the Taft-Hartley injunction would mean a ruinous waterfront war, ordered an election. When the results were in, the ILA had won. It had received 9,060 votes to 7,568 for the AFL, while 4,399 votes were challenged, principally by the AFL.

How explain the hold of the old union in an obviously rotten and exploitative situation? A list of factors indicate the complexity of the problem:

- While many of the longshoremen were cowed and exploited, a sizable core, roughly one-third of the work force, did have considerable privileges because of the system of favoritism. This group worked hard for the ILA.
- A number of the wildcat walkouts over the collective bargaining agreements were not as "spontaneous" as they seemed but were inspired by dissident racketeer elements who sought to use these walkouts either for shakedowns of shipping concerns or to pry control of

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some piers from entrenched groups. Hence, the depth of the "spontaneous" support the AFL would get was exaggerated.

• Politics is primarily a matter of organization; and organization, particularly in such a rough and ready place as the waterfront, is built on the informal and "natural" leaders of the group. Years of racket control, however, had eliminated the independent leadership among the men.

• The longshoremen were suspicious of the AFL's intentions. Many resented the close ties of the AFL with the Dewey waterfront commission, and the AFL's support of the licensing and registration provisions of the Act—which smacked to many unions of government-controlled hiring halls. Moreover, the longshoremen feared that Paul Hall's seafarers would take their jobs.

• The AFL union imprudently accepted into its ranks several old ILA officials who had mob connections, principally Tony (Cheese) Marchitto of Jersey City. This confirmed a latent cynicism of many longshoremen that both sides were no good.

• Ethnic considerations were important. The Italians in Brooklyn feared Anastasia, the boss of the Brooklyn piers, but they knew him as one of their own. The AFL was never able to obtain a foothold in the closely-knit Italian community.

• The ILA itself put on a "reform" face. At a special convention in Philadelphia, in mid-November, Joe Ryan, who had been acclaimed president "for life," stepped down with a pension "for life," and Captain William J. Bradley, head of a small tugboat local, was named president. John L. Lewis, for reasons of power, or for pique at the AFL, thereupon announced his backing of the "new" ILA and pledged a loan of $200,000 to aid the union in its fight against the AFL.

From 1953 to 1956, the ILA sought some cover of respectability in the labor movement. In the "public morality" of American society, corruption can be tolerated, if clothed, but naked corruption is unsettling. At first the ILA under the new "reform" leadership of William Bradley, a former tugboat Captain, sought to affiliate with the Miners. But this was not feasible since the Miners, because Lewis had refused to sign the non-Communist affadavit of the Taft-Hartley Act, could not participate in the NLRB elections. Bradley then worked out a "mutual-aid pact" with Jimmy Hoffa, the fast-moving boss of the midwest Teamsters, who was then seeking to extend his power in the union. There seems to have been private negotiations, too, with Harry Bridges' west coast longshoremen, a move privately favored by Hoffa, which would have set up a bi-coast teamster-longshore combination; this is still in the works.

In October 1956, the AFL made its last challenge to the ILA. But it was obvious that its chances were slim. Maritime union leader Joe Curran, mindful of the need for longshoremen cooperation on the docks, came out publicly in support of the ILA. When the votes were

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announced, the ILA had won by 11,827 to 7,428. After all the strenuous efforts at clean-up, the old crowd was still in control.

The Cycle Resumes

Looking back at the four decades, how could such a corrupt and fetid state of affairs have continued for so long? One simple answer is that most of the individuals concerned found it difficult to recognize the face of evil. Joe Ryan, the long-time head of the union, was not a vicious man. A morose and sentimental individual, he came to success through the "freight entrance" and knew the seamy side of life the way a well-worn *douanier* knows the little vices and hypocrisies of the great travelers. The waterfront is tough, and he accepted life that way. Like many self-made men he had the scorn —and fear—of "do-gooders" and reformers who have never known hard knocks.

In the union Ryan was a captive. Each little local around a pier or neighborhood was a molecular world of its own with its own traditions, prerogatives, cliques, and jealousies. Each warlord knew his particular work and felt at home there; the larger society, the complexities of the skyscraper world over the "shadow line" were beyond his ken. Joe Ryan was the emissary to this world. He was the "waxer" who, despite the rough manner, could talk and hold his own. That is why he reigned, but did not rule.

The steamship companies accepted the "tough world," too. It was easier to make a "deal." Besides, "the men are undisciplined, and need a strong hand." So, on loading and other lucrative concessions, the companies looked the other way—in exchange for the promise of the hiring boss that he would keep the men in line and get the ships in and out fast. Besides, too, many of the costs of doing business were met by government maritime subsidies—so what is the point of getting excited?

For the loaders, tough punks from the tough west-side world, the waterfront was a place where everybody was out to make a buck, so why not they? "The steamship companies couldn't complain; it cost them nothing to have loaders on the pier. The truckers? They objected to loading only because they wanted to do the job themselves so they could make the buck out of the customer rather than us. The consignee? Why should they object; they could pass the costs along to the customers easily. The public? What's that? Everybody is out to make a buck; some pay, some don't; that's life."

Underneath all three, bearing the load, were the longshoremen. Fifty years ago, the Irish were the dominant group. Many of the west-side Hudson piers are still manned by the Irish, but the majority of longshoremen today are Italians, and "Austrians"— a vague waterfront term that covers all Slavs and East Europeans. Traditionally, most of the longshoremen have lived close to the docks, forming a homogeneous, self-contained community. Along with the house, there is the bar, and the social club, and occasionally the parish house as the

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center of community life. St. Veronica's Parish on the west side is a typical longshore slum. The men live in a narrow band of tenements between Houston and the Federal Home of Detention. Slashed across the center is Pig Alley, a block-long cobblestoned, junk-strewn thoroughfare where in the daytime the boys play stickball, and at night the souses lurch along until they slide down into the street to sleep off their drunk. In the summer, the street is the living room. There are the usual number of brawls, and on Sunday the little girls walk self-consciously in their white organdies to communion. Most of the people live in the houses where they were born, and die there. There are the usual feuds and fights. But withal, it is a community, and no one is a "cop-hollerer." In recent years some longshoremen have sought to break away from the docks. They moved to Queens, the Bronx, and Washington Heights. The reason usually is "the kids." The world is a jungle, and they want to give their children a better start. On the docks, only the mobsters are successful, and they are a poor model for the devout.

As the Irish have moved out, the Italians have moved in, and the old patterns of exploitation in its many vicious forms appear once more. Many of the men are illegal aliens, smuggled into the country like cattle. The dock is an anonymous place to work. Most of the aliens came from the hometowns of the ILA organizers. Subject to arrest and deportation, the men are unusually docile. Hence, it is easy to arrange "short gangs." Fifteen men do the work of the regular twenty-two whose "names" are entered on the books. The difference is split between the hiring boss and the stevedore. The steamship companies don't mind; the men work fast and efficiently.

How can one break this vicious cycle? The one answer is the "regularization" of work. If the number of longshoremen were limited, and steady gangs regularly employed, one source of the exploitation would be removed. The action of the Waterfront Commission is a step in that direction.

But this is not enough. The matrix of the problem is the dilapidated physical condition of the port. The New York waterfront remains, aging, chipping, cracking, and congested by traffic. With everyone crowded by space, they became crowded too by "time" and sought to cut corners. And the fulcrum is still time. Ships still require a fast turn-around to equalize mounting dock costs. Trucks still wait long hours to load or discharge consignments. The pier facilities are still inadequate to speed the flow of cargo; the narrow, fringe-like piers still have little radial space to permit trucks to maneuver and unload. Forced into the narrow, gridiron-patterned streets built to accommodate the horse and wagon, the trucks force all traffic to back up behind them. And astride the ports stand the mobs; at this vantage point between trucker and steamship company, like medieval robber barons, they erected their sluice gates and exacted their tolls. The barriers may have been torn down. But the dilapidation remains.

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PORKCHOPPER PASSAGE

David Carper

Not long ago in Washington someone wanted to know how many union staff people worked in the city and whether an accurate estimate could be made of the number of Jews with union staff jobs in the community.

The first guesses offered were that there must be about five thousand labor staff people in Washington, and of them, maybe half Jews.

Actually as nearly as anyone could work out, there are about a thousand union staff workers of whom no more than fifty are Jews. What is true of Washington is approximately true of the country: Union staff people and Jews in the labor movement tend to be highly visible so that there seem to be many more of them than there actually are. Similarly, despite the advertised contention, there are enormously fewer racketeers and crooks, and hardly a smidgeon of the radicals in the labor movement that everyone takes for granted—though in this there is an excuse, for a surprising number of sagging middle aged limpets around union offices insist truculently that they are still revolutionary radicals, a generation after their political glands have entirely shrivelled.

It isn't even that the radicalism is a genuine memory; most of the pretenders were never radicals, instead were honorable militants, brave decent bullies on an organizing drive, and intensely loyal to the union, which was administered like a gang, company and boss haters in the same way tough teen-agers are cop-haters, but with few exceptions, never radical in the sense that they wanted to plough up the old growths in the society and begin again. An incredibly offensive article which appeared last year in the *AFL-CIO News* puts the situation on the big screen in technicolor. Written by a labor editor who now runs a public relations firm that handles only labor organization accounts, it reviles a business paper for critizing union leaders who stay at the best hotels, eat in the credit card restaurants, and have developed tastes for expensive consumer goods and services. The labor editor steamed for 1500 words on the bourbon-like snobs who could speak the view that union officials were not as good as company officials and not every bit as qualified to sleep between the same silk sheets in the same supercilious circumstances.

Jerks ply their trades in all kinds of professions, but this piece was printed in the *AFL-CIO News* on the editorial page. No one protested, no one was sufficiently embarrassed to become public about the uneasiness. Not that there was no expression of radical moral disapprobation; there was not even a gesture of disengage-

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ment to indicate that if no one felt particularly guilty about his wage and working condition at least there was democratic conscience enough to twinge over an ostentatious display of privileged status.

The sad fact is that most union staff people think they are underpaid, even though they better than double the take-home of their rank and file, not counting what comes free in expense account living. Talk in private revolves about staff claims to a higher wage more often than it is concerned with the unpleasant situation of the people who pay dues.

THERE IS NOTHING wrong or immoral about the porkchop attitude, it is the view of most people who work on jobs where they can see what life is like on the next rung. This desire to better oneself is supposed to be a right every American has, but, of course, the labor movement rhetoric which is organized around the vocabulary of 19th century socialism, insists on the contrary. Its anthems still sing of the outcast and starving. But the disparity between preachment and practice is not even hypocritical, it numbly identifies the views of union staff members with those of their neighbors in the middle income communities where they live.

The *New Yorker* cartoon which asked "Has anyone ever thought of making Walter Reuther a vice-president at a hundred grand a year" was wrong about the UAW president, but as exact as a mathematical formula about most union officers, representatives, writers, research people, and lawyers. There is a steady movement from labor union payrolls to public relations agencies, labor relations firms, private law firms, to governments, to printing firms that sell to unions, to universities and to the other side of the bargaining table. The recent departures have not been featured by conversions, psychic traumas, or bitterness. On the contrary, there is a glad-you-made-it gaiety, usually a farewell party, and a going-away present, sometimes even an engraved watch, bought with a collection to which everyone gives generously.

Now, it is obvious that the youthful militant fought on the picket lines not to change the society but at most to change places in the society, and sometimes simply because he was unemployed and flatbroke with nothing better to do. Middle-aged or older and wind-broken, he continues to mouth the old picket line agitational formulations, as if they expressed his views and grievances, despite his Pontiac, Buick, Oldsmobile, his house full of appliances, his children at college, his rather generous retirement plan, and his regular investments in a mutual fund. But curiously, these people do redeem themselves occasionally, apart from their reliability on the job. In the middle of a staff bitching session, for example, a man will say: Nothing is too good for the workers—representatives, intending the double irony.

Except for the common view of their wage, their standard economic circumstance, and their universal acceptance of the present organization of the American society, in fact, if not in trade union speeches, however, there is no category of union people which corresponds to the organization man in the large corporation and in the company suburbs.

One reason is that the labor movement administration is still unorganized, that is, has not become the ordered, regulated, classified bureauc-

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racy which is the nature of most big companies and government agencies. Wages, despite half hearted gestures toward standardization, are set by personal negotiations and depend as much on cronyism as anything else, though despite this fact they are surprisingly clustered around a democratic eight or nine thousand dollars a year, not including expenses. Job assignments are misty and tend to overlap, with the manpower so in excess of effective utilization most of the time, that there is competition for work. Unions still are informal societies, whose authority rests on the charisma of a gang leader, or on what amounts to the same thing, a political boss.

Despite the recent recognition of a staff union in the AFL-CIO, most staff members of the various international unions benefit from none of the protecting regulations which govern the life of a company or government white collar worker, and none of the contractual guarantees which secure hourly rated workers against the whimsies of supervision.

Union staff people, with their own union accents and a characteristic emphasis on first names and nicknames work in a "yes, boss; you're right, boss; pretty good, boss" universe.

Put another way, the union organization man is not an organization man because there is no organization to belong to; he is, in an unfortunate but completely unreprehensible way, a gang member in a personal association with a gang leader.

This is, on the job. Off the job, he is his own man and subject to none of the universal pressures which harass husbands and wives in organizational families, lodged in the other-directed rabbit warrens of the new bureaucracy. In fact, to illustrate how great the difference is, wives are relatively without importance in most unions and tend to be left home most of the time, even during conventions and junkets. Girl friends are not uncommon, and relations with them incur no penalties or even expressions of disapproval.

So long as a staff member works with reasonable responsibility on his job, roistering, carousing, poker playing, boisterousness, obscenity, all the expressions of male animality which a polite corporation society tries to discourage, are accepted.

In part, this reflects the fact that most of the people who now work for unions came out of the rougher proletarian society of a generation ago, before high schools were universal, before conventional manners became general in the city. But the convention behavior of union employees also arises from the character of their work, the fact that they travel a great deal, live much in hotels, are very often men away from home. In this circumstance, business men behave in the same way; the mortality of marriages among business men who move to Washington has been noted in the Washington press: like union staff in a comparable new situation, they shed old wives for younger secretaries.

WITHOUT TAKING a census, it is probably true that union staff people are:

a) mostly middle-aged and older Irish Catholics

b) next in number but far down Protestants no more than two generations from a farm, and most likely a southern farm; a significant but small number of the Protestants are ex-clergymen

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c) then about an equal number of people of Italian or Slavic descent, Catholic too
d) Jews, chiefly hired as lawyers, research people, or writers
e) Negroes,—and finally
f) women.

Off the job these ethnic, religious and racial affiliations play as important a role in determining the social character and behavior profile of a union employee as his identification with the union. Even when he moves out into the Democratic Party in his community, as he most often does, he will resemble the indigenes in the community, the characteristic small business men, or successful-on-a-limited-scale insurance man, or the enlightened bar owner more than he will resemble a transcontinental class. A Bell Telephone or GE man or a bank representative on the Junior Chamber of Commerce is almost interchangeable with any of his similars from San Diego to New Haven, but a New York building trades business agent could never be mistaken for a Rubber Worker staff person in western Oklahoma, and only a Tibetan would confuse either one of these men with an Amalgamated Clothing Worker staff person out of Philadelphia. In each case, their neighbors will look more like them than their colleagues in the labor movement. Again their opinions will be closer to those of their friends in their church or lodge than to those of people on similar jobs in a different union in a different part of the country.

Universities that teach students conventional manners standardize the men and women who seek careers in the companies. Union staff people do not go through such a patterning process. A Hoosier factory worker who gets a job on the staff of IUE from an Evansville factory is still a Hoosier farm boy, talks like one, dresses like one and eats like one, even after he goes on the union payroll. It is impossible to confuse him with a UAW staff member out of an Italian local in New Jersey, or a French Canadian out of a textile local in Maine, or a Negro who has made the leap to a union payroll out of a packing-house in Chicago. Each one despite TV, radio, and mass produced clothes advertised in national magazines bears the stamp of his origin, at least this year.

THE WORKING CLASS origins, prejudices, and virtues of most of the staff people in the labor movement make life difficult for intellectuals who come out of universities to work in the labor movement. Frequently, the conventionally learned ones mistake differences in manners, speaking habits, and interests for differences in intelligence. Because they tend to undervalue the skills and mental attitudes needed for leadership in an informal society and put too high a price on familiarity with books and formal knowledge, first encounters produce misunderstandings which very often are fatal for the tenure of the intellectuals. Many do hang on, however, despite their sense of presence in a foreign country and their uneasiness in the midst of the staff stiffness toward longhairs, a word, by the way, which with New Yorker, Brooklyn, CCNY, and easterner very often is a synonym for Jew.

Those who last out the first strangeness and deflorescence, while not qualified to take part in the most intimate bonhommeries, are nevertheless accepted and respected. They, on their side, come finally to a recogni-

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tion of the genuine intellectual capacities and wisdom of the average union staff person. A very few intellectuals, it is true, stay on as job holders within a cynical invisible retirement, but even these people grant the undoubted competence of the average business agent, grand lodge or international representative. For about this matter, there can be no argument. Almost invariably to win their places on the staff the representatives had to survive a brutal, rough and tumble competition which demanded sharpness, intelligence and very fast judgment. They made their porkchops with expense account clusters in a series of trials as exacting as any professional political contest. However you judge them they come out very well, they hold their own in bargaining sessions with the well-paid and well-trained company representatives, in politics they do better than hold their own in the fastest leagues against lawyers, college professors, business men and the rest of those who increasingly try their hands at political ambitions. They are versatile, organizational technicians who can write effective leaflets, make speeches, wheel deals, organize a meeting, or run a caucus whenever the need arises, out of their hats if necessary. In any state of the union, for example, the union people in politics tower alongside their non-union confreres. In state legislatures where union people have won places, it has been the unvarying observation that they have brought the old average, based on lawyers and business men and retired farmers, up to a creditable show.

The next generation of union employees may have better manners and live lives that correspond closer to the images their incomes generate. Forces are already operating to shape union staff people in the same kind of matrix as the corporation types in other institutions. The newest appointments to union staffs even now are beginning to appear in the latest model, usually with some college training, usually genteel, usually with the evidences of national and working class origins polished off.

The increasing responsibilities of unions in the society, the steady increase of personnel, for both valid reasons and in response to Parkinson's law, staff organization, accounting demands, and the die-like pressure of agencies like the McClellan Committee are slowly but inevitably transforming the labor movement into a civil service. The growing integration of the labor movement into the administrative community politically, economically, socially, is already reducing the privacy which has up until now characterized the lives of union staff people off their jobs. Continuing public scrutiny will require the relaxed masculine behavior of old times to be put aside. Walter Reuther's antiseptic private life will likely become the model for the porkchoppers' deportment in the bureaucratic era ahead.

At this moment, however, the labor movement is a sanctuary where you can still find the non-organizational man, the 19th century entrepreneurial leader, surrounded by his workmen, all hired personally, all on a first-name basis with the patron, and not one of whom dares answer the old man back.

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HOFFA AND THE UNDERWORLD

Paul Jacobs

It was all very odd, even eerie, as if by some trick one of my youthful political fantasies had come true in a perverted form. There I sat, in a union hall jammed with cheering truck drivers, listening to their union president denounce the capitalist press, radio and TV as instruments of the bosses and shouting at the tough, burly teamsters that they could never expect anything from their employers and that without the union they were helpless.

The reality of that meeting was tinged with fantasy for me because it took place not during the hectic thirties, in Minneapolis, when the Dunne brothers, leaders of teamster Local 544, were the heroes of the Trotskyist movement, but in 1959. This meeting was in Detroit and the speaker was Jimmy Hoffa, talking to his own local union while a CBS crew filmed him for TV.

Now, obviously Jimmy Hoffa is not committed to overthrowing the capitalist system. Indeed, quite the opposite is true—Hoffa is a staunch defender of American capitalism (after all, it's been very good to him) and his speech was a singular exercise in vulgar demagogery. But at that union meeting Hoffa symbolized, as he does in general, some of the most crucial problems facing the American trade unions.

Except in one extremely important way, I consider Hoffa a characteristic product of the old AFL tradition. I've known Hoffa for only three years, ever since I went to Detroit to write about him for *The Reporter,* but during this time I've seen him in a wide variety of circumstances, behaving in many different ways. In spite of these opportunities and though I've frequently talked to him at length, followed the McClellan Committees hearings rather carefully, read a great deal about him and often discussed him with his subordinates, as well as with employers, public officials and knowledgeable newspapermen, Hoffa still remains an enigma to me.

HOFFA IS STILL pretty spontaneous, although growing more cautious in his public speech. He exudes cockiness and ebullience; he has a great sense of native wit; he can be absolutely charming as he smiles with a boyish, dimpled grin; he's exceedingly smart and he works very, very hard at his job of running the teamsters. Indeed, that's all he does. There is little overt hypocrisy about Hoffa and a great deal of apparent forthrightness.

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But there is another side to him as well, a more frightening one. When Hoffa becomes really angry, his grey-green eyes get incredibly cold and menacing. It's then that his ruthlessness, his obvious belief in physical violence as an instrument of power shows through as an important element in his personality. Usually the quest for power is but one motivation in most leaders' lives, but in Hoffa's case, power, linked with a desire to be feared rather than loved, seems an obsession. He has great contempt for and distrust of most people. He is tied, by strange cords, to the brutal men of the underworld. Still, other union leaders grow angry when crossed; others are avaricious for power; others use violence. It is Hoffa's attitude to the underworld that sets him apart.

II

Whether or not Hoffa has alliances with the underworld, he is certainly very tolerant of it. It is not enough of an explanation for his attitude to say that from a moral viewpoint he does not really recognize the underworld's existence. To Hoffa almost all of society is peopled by businessmen looking to make a fast buck; politicians who, like ex-Senator George Bender, say, "If cats and dogs would vote, I would shake hands with them... You don't have to become a prostitute yourself but sometimes you have to get their votes"; police officers on the take; respected insurance companies willing, indeed anxious, to give kick-backs to union officials in exchange for welfare and pension fund accounts; lawyers willing to make payoffs to get "good deals" for their business clients and employers who try to cheat their workers while stealing from their customers.

But even this cynical view of the world, in which personal loyalty and not squealing to the cops become the basic virtues, does not totally explain Hoffa's ties to the underworld. For Hoffa must also know that this area is where he is most vulnerable, if not as yet to the law, at least to the blows of public and private opinion. Nevertheless, he has continually resisted purging the teamsters of those elements who, only with the greatest charity, can be described as being even on the fringes of decency.

And while the presence of criminal elements in the union may be explained by the fact that the trucking industry has always been the kind of marginal business which verges between irrespectability and crime, it does not explain Hoffa's willingness to permit the continued access of criminals to teamster locals. It is true that even when the Trostkyists controlled the Minneapolis teamsters, there were mysterious underworld relationships that occasionally rose from beneath the surface. A local teamster union president in Minneapolis was once murdered under strange conditions and gangster elements once attempted, unsuccessfully, to muscle into one of the locals. It was the revolutionary ideology of the Trotskyist leadership, their commitment to use the teamsters' union for a larger political purpose that most effectively prevented the underworld from getting a foothold, either through force or collaboration, during their tenure of office.

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It is (as we would have said once upon an ancient time) by no means an accident that Hoffa's power base, his home local, is a drivers' local. These are men who generally have little formal education in a period of American life when high-school has been extended another two years through the creation of the junior college. These are men physically isolated from each other at work, frequently away when union meetings are held, dependent upon business agents rather than fellow-members for the protection of their rights, working in an industry to which respectability has been late in coming and where the police, on highways and in towns, are rarely thought of as friends.

The industry tradition of toughness, the isolated conditions of work and the special characteristics of the drivers help define the loose boundaries of the moral territory in which Hoffa roams without great complaints from his union membership. In a hostile and dangerous work world, where toughness for both employers and employees is essential to survival, where the union contract is necessarily complicated, where it is expected that an employer will try to cheat his employees and vice-versa, it is only natural for the members gladly to abdicate responsibility to the toughest and smartest of them all—Jimmy, who may be a son of a bitch but is, after all, "our" son of a bitch. And if he makes deals with the underworld . . . well, that's the way of the world.

Hoffa's possible underworld relationships seem to me the most important questions thus far posed about him. Indeed, many of the teamster procedures, which seemed so extraordinary to the McClellan Committee, are common to other unions and have significance only when related to substantive problems. But Hoffa's underworld ties do mark him off from many other union leaders with whom he otherwise has much more in common than is generally admitted. Unfortunately, the McClellan Committee staff came to their work unequipped to make distinctions between matters of substance and of insignificance.

Quite apart from Robert Kennedy's obvious obsession with the pursuit of Hoffa, what was primarily lacking in the McClellan Committee was a sense of judgment. As a result, the real problems of the American trade unions have become obscured by masses of sensational triviality, dredged up by the committee staff. This is not to suggest that the committee's task would have been an easy one, even if Kennedy has been less naive than he was about trade unions and business. Once the ethics of American business society are accepted as normal only fine lines separate "proper" practices from "improper" ones.

III

Quite apart from the particular case of Hoffa, I do not believe that the general problem of the relationship between the underworld and other segments of our society has been explored with sufficient seriousness. Gus Tyler of the ILGWU has been pointing at the problem for some time and I agree completely with him that we must look into this aspect of American life far more searchingly.

It is true that there are enormous handicaps facing such an enter-

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prise—the lack of access to information; the fact that, unlike government, business or the unions, there are so few ex-radical comrades in the underworld, able to have some perspective on it; the overwhelming truth that the price for betraying the underworld is almost always death or something just short of it; and the fact that important political interests are linked to the underworld. Nevertheless, there has been surprisingly little serious attention paid to this phenomenon. Perhaps if a serious study were made, we would learn a great deal about the development of the underworld in general, rather than only in individual unions. One trouble, of course, is that no one in the modern underworld writes his memoirs. Lepke's view of American society would have been fascinating and Frank Costello's even more so.

In the case of unions, it is easily understandable why, until recently, less attention has been paid to the underworld than to other problems. There is a general disposition on the part of writers sympathetic to the stated aspirations of the unions, to ignore the underworld's presence even if they are aware of it. I also suspect that in spite of the adverse newspaper publicity, there is much less underworld infiltration of unions than of business. The unions in mass production industries are less vulnerable to underworld operations than are business enterprises, and there are still very many union leaders whose radical pasts or middle-class presents act as barriers to underworld infiltration.

Since so little is actually known about Hoffa's possible relations to the underworld, it is extremely difficult to compare him, on this score, with other union leaders who have also had some connections, by choice or necessity, with either the true underworld or the prosperous demimonde of American society. I suspect, as I've indicated, that here there may be a marked difference between Hoffa and other union officials but fascinating as the subject is, a discussion about it must inevitably peter out in gross speculation.

In other ways, however, Hoffa is much more comparable to one fairly large group of union leaders. Since he's franker than most of the others and more willing openly to state his real beliefs about the role of American unions and union leaders, he provides a most useful model, albeit of extreme design, which can be used as a comparison check for one type of union leader in America.

How much of Hoffa's apparent candor is a pose and how much is truly a reflection of his conviction is an intriguing question. Almost all of the journalists who have spent time with him are quickly shaken by the discrepancy between his public image and what appears to be the private reality, as revealed by his hard work, lack of hypocrisy and strange quality of frankness. These attributes are so refreshing and appealing in comparison with the worn-out jazz, boringly repeated *ad nauseam,* by some of the sanctimonious, self-righteous and stupid monomaniacs in union leadership, that there is a tendency, which one must guard against, to gloss over some of Hoffa's faults.

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It may also be that what disturbs many people, in and out of trade unions, is Hoffa's unwillingness to play the game, making a buck here and there, getting fat on the expense account and still keeping a civil tongue in his cheek by talking like everyone else. For some reason, perhaps rooted in his past and in his own image of himself, Hoffa, except when forced to by a consciousness of public relations problems, refuses to live up to the surface standards of American society. My hunch is that this flows from (as also we would once have said) his contempt for most people. But if in these personal characteristics he is different from most American union leaders, in many other ways he is far more like them.

Hoffa's completely paternalistic attitude toward the teamsters is one common denominator he shares with other union leaders. The members of the teamsters' union are Hoffa's constituency: he takes care of them, and in Hoffa's case this is done personally, through direct contact. Hoffa is probably the only international president who still runs the affairs of his own local while carrying out his other work. He is on the phone every day from Washington to Detroit, conducting local business and he attends local meetings at least every six weeks, settling shop grievances, giving contract interpretations, speaking to new groups of workers as they are being organized and generally behaving as an extremely active local leader.

In return for his work on their behalf, Hoffa demands total loyalty from the union members and his staff. He is probably more accessible to them than the president of any other international union in the U.S. Since Hoffa's feeling that he is the key element in the success of the teamsters' union is also shared by his staff and followers, he rarely faces palace revolutions or even the threat of them; his staff and much of his membership share his belief that they are dependent upon him for survival.

But is any union leader more paternalistic than Dubinsky? Does Reuther permit any less personal loyalty than Hoffa? When for the first time McDonald faced opposition from within the steelworkers' union, wasn't his administration's entire machinery put into high gear to smash the possible revolt? Paternalism, the leader's identification of the union with himself and the demand for personal loyalty are hardly unique to Hoffa and the teamsters; all that is unique is that Hoffa has been more gauche about doing what other union leaders have learned to do with finesse. "I've had to do everything myself to make this union a success," he once told me, openly stating without modesty, what many others believe true but do not say of themselves.

Like some other union leaders, Hoffa views the union as his personal property, a resource available to him for his disposal as he sees fit, restricted only by the bothersome limitations imposed upon him by law plus some vague and undefined attitudes of doing "good" for the membership. He always speak of the teamsters as "my union" and the "my" here carries the connotation of personal property in addition to that of pride.

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IV

To Hoffa dues money is akin to the operating capital of a business. This view of the union as an institution whose resources can be *incidentally* used for the personal financial benefit of its leaders is reinforced by those institutions that seek business from unions. Certain insurance companies, for example, hot in pursuit of the vast sums of money now available in welfare and pension funds, have always sought to persuade union leaders that the choice of which insurance carrier got the union account was fundamentally a matter of the leader's personal preference, a preference which they then tried to affect in a variety of ways.

There is a wider range of attitudes among trade union leaders and members on this question than on the identification of the union with its leader, but I think that at least a few other union leaders secretly share Hoffa's attitude towards the union treasury. They feel restrained from acting out their beliefs by fear of exposure, the internal controls of the unions or by the carryover of attitudes formed when their organizations were struggling to survive.

When, however, one examines the far less important but curiously troublesome problem of expense accounts, the distinctions between union leaders grow less sharp even among those who reject Hoffa's view of the treasury as a vehicle of personal power. I am not here concerned so much with the possible financial rape of a union treasury through the exploitation of expense accounts (though this is possible in rare cases) as I am with the "legitimate" use of expense accounts while on union business or the practice, not at all restricted to unions, of manufacturing a reason to take a trip and then justifying it by the excuse of "business." Neither the McClellan Committee nor anyone else has examined, at any great length, the use of expense accounts by unions or industry. To do so would have raised the entire question of the role played by the expense account for nearly everybody in society—for the businessman who goes to Las Vegas with a customer, for the corporation which spends thousands of dollars entertaining foreign buyers, and for the defense industry that flies high ranking military officers to lush Bahamian islands for "conferences."

This is only one instance of practices now common in all of our society, practices which to union leaders like Hoffa are built into the very matrix of the world. One of the reasons for Hoffa's deep cynicism is that he continually contrasts the stated ideals of the society with the actions of its members and then concludes from the comparison that the only common denominator for all people is hypocrisy.

A case in point was the recent meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council in Puerto Rico. Traditionally, before the merger with the CIO, winter meetings of the old AFL council had been held in Miami Beach. George Meany wanted last winter's meeting of the AFL-CIO council again to be held there, but the council, under goading from some of its members, either more ascetic or more conscious of public pressure, voted against Florida as the site for the meeting.

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It was then that Meany "arranged" for the council to be invited to Puerto Rico, which is also a very pleasant place to be during the winter. As for Hoffa, he went ahead and held his board meeting in Miami, as usual, giving no explanations, using no subterfuges and feeling no need to justify his decision.

LET ME MAKE CLEAR that what concerns me here is not whether other union leaders are more hypocritical than Hoffa. Some are, some are not. That is really no matter. What does seem important to me is that Hoffa does share with many other union leaders a common set of values and aspirations, based, naturally, on the predominant mores of American society.

"Don't give me that!" says Hoffa scornfully to me when I argue heatedly with him about the narrowness, in his perspective, of trade union purposes. "What do you think I am, the State Department? I don't want to get into world politics. I have enough trouble taking care of my own members."

"If I had a bunch of Detroit cops here, I'd clean out these joints in no time," he said disgustedly as we once strolled, loudly quarreling, along Grant Avenue, the Boulevard of the Beats in San Francisco. "All these people need is a bath," he sneered scornfully as he looked at the habitues of the Co-existence Bagel Shop, thus expressing the most primitive reactions to anything out of the ordinary, anything disturbing the status quo; reactions more quietly shared by most other union leaders.

"I don't want to change the world," says Hoffa and here again he only states openly what many other American union leaders actually believe, in spite of all the resolutions dutifully passed by them at all the conventions.

When Hoffa says he doesn't want to change the world, he is speaking for those union leaders who don't even want to change their own unions. Except for a few men, considered oddballs by their colleagues and, to a great extent, by their members, most American union officials are convinced that fundamentally the world in which they have achieved leadership is the best of all possible worlds and needs few changes, either externally or internally.

Indeed, I believe that if it had not been for the pressure exerted upon Meany by some of the old CIO leaders, coupled with the public attention given to the problems of corruption, the federation would not have expelled the teamsters. Instead, it would have tried to maintain its traditional attitude of giving complete autonomy to international unions and distrusting any disturbance in the status quo which is, after all, a good one, by and large, for most union leaders and members. It seems fairly clear, at this point, that the attempt within the federation to give the headquarters effective power over the affiliates, as in the old CIO, is failing. On the ethical practices level, the operating engineers and carpenters are still within the family; the NAACP complains bitterly that nothing has been done to take action against unions violating the civil rights provisions of the constitution; and

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jurisdictional battles go on, only slightly affected by decisions of either the umpire or council itself.

V

Let's now refer to the issue of democracy in the teamsters, comparing Hoffa's union with others. During the CBS television show on the teamsters, several shop stewards were interviewed and discussed the low attendance at union meetings. To outsiders, especially liberal outsiders, the fact that only a small percentage of union members attend meetings is somehow taken as an indication that undemocratic practices prevail. Yet the teamster attendance record is probably neither better nor worse than that of any other union—throughout the unions attendance at normal meetings is poor. For many years, at union summer camps, and training schools there have been dreary sessions devoted to increasing membership participation at local meetings. But attendance still remains the same—low. Suppose, however, it didn't. Suppose it went sharply up and there was none of the intimidation of members which may, in fact, exist in some teamsters locals. What problems would be solved? Does anyone seriously believe that Hoffa would not be overwhelmingly reelected teamster president even if every teamster member voted in a secret ballot election? Would this fact make it right for Hoffa to be president?

Attempts to equate "democracy" in unions with membership participation conjure up sharp dilemmas within the teamsters. At the moment, Hoffa is engaged in a struggle with the board of monitors over his right to hold the presidency of the union. For months, Hoffa has been attempting to hold a union convention and have his right to the presidency reaffirmed by the convention delegates. The monitors, however, have thus far refused and instead are preparing court actions to have Hoffa removed from his office.

But Hoffa's desire for a convention and the monitors' refusal to permit it are obviously based on his and their belief that such a convention would certainly elect Hoffa president, even without his having to stuff ballot boxes, illegally elect delegates or in any way attempt to influence improperly the choice of delegates to the convention.

In this situation the courts, through the monitors, are being asked to prevent the direct control of the union by its members—one form of that "union democracy" so glibly idealized by Congress and the press. I am not here suggesting that because Hoffa is the membership's choice, therefore the membership is right; I am only trying to point out that "union democracy" in the sense of a free membership choice of a union president is not really wanted by many who plump loudly for it if the results are known, in advance, to be contrary to the generally accepted standards of public good or particular private interests. In this case, the generally accepted standards mean keeping Hoffa from the presidency, if possible, even though the membership may want him there.

One rather interesting element in this situation is that the remainder of the trade union leadership has been silent on this attempted in-

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trusion by the monitors and courts into the teamsters' internal life. If, as seems possible, Hoffa is prevented from holding an election and then deposed from the presidency, it could easily set a precedent for similar court action in other cases. Yet the possibility has not brought any public protest or comment from other union leaders in the AFL-CIO probably because no matter what their feelings, it would be considered impolitic for any union leader publicly to identify himself with Hoffa in this situation. Similarly, even when the McClellan Committee attacked the teamsters incorrectly or for policies carried out by many other unions, there was deep silence from the AFL-CIO.

Yet there seems to be another consequence of the attempts of Congress and the monitors to remove Hoffa: sympathy with him appears to be building up within his own union and possibly among other union leaders. Just as the U.S. Government made a martyr out of Harry Bridges within the ILWU and outside it, so Hoffa, in spite of all the McClellan Committee's revelations about him, is beginning to take on the air of a man who is being harassed. When Hoffa addressed a recent meeting in San Francisco of the Western Conference of teamsters, he shared the platform with and was applauded by the president of the very large California AFL-CIO and by its secretary-treasurer, the single most powerful labor leader in the state. Somehow, these officials feel more comfortable with Hoffa than with other, more ideological, leaders. Hoffa, more than Reuther, is their kind of a guy.

THE SOMETIMES PUBLIC and more frequently private attitude of friendliness maintained by other union leaders towards Hoffa is also accounted for by simple economic self-interest. Strategically, the teamsters are in an excellent position to assist or hurt other unions and it is the recognition of this power, for example, that lies behind Hoffa's attempts, for three years, to bring about an alliance between the teamsters and Harry Bridges' ILWU.

Vis-à-vis their membership and the society at large, Bridges and Hoffa play startlingly similar roles. Both are outcasts or, more correctly, since it was not a voluntary act in either case, both are cast-outs from the main institutions of labor; organized opposition groups are as non-existent in the ILWU as in the teamsters; and both Bridges and Hoffa, oddly enough, have rather intellectual seconds-in-command—the Communist party-oriented Louis Goldblatt in the ILWU and the ex-socialist Harold Gibbons in the teamsters. Hoffa and Bridges are both tough, raw and not especially cultivated. Nor are Hoffa's bad English (steadily improving) and Bridges' Australian accent with its cockney overtones handicaps to them, considering their membership.*

* Incidentally, the Hoffa-Bridges alliance seems to have changed the liberal image of Hoffa for the better, at least on the West Coast. Out here, in the last stronghold of Stalinist-influenced political liberalism, Bridges still retains some of the charisma of the past when a white-capped longshoreman was the romantic figure of the thirties. Even in the conservative community the public reputation of both Bridges and of the ILWU is one of such scrupulous financial honesty that an alliance between Hoffa and Bridges requires either the scaling down of one's estimate of Bridges or becoming more defensive about Hoffa.

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Neither the teamsters nor ILWU membership appear disturbed about an alliance, although a merger would be far more difficult to sell to the ILWU ranks. In the case of the teamster members, their expectations of Hoffa are of a simple order. Like most other union members, they are content, on the whole, with the wage increases he brings them and willing, indeed anxious, to abdicate to him all responsibility for making serious policy decisions. The great majority of them do not conceive of the union as either an instrument for the carrying out of any social ideals or as an arena in which they can seek leadership positions.

If a teamster member does desire to be a union leader, he rarely pursues his goal through challenging the existing administration. Rather, he seeks to become part of the administration and attach himself to the leader in power. Here, too, there is a great similarity between the teamsters and other unions. The special conditions of teamster members, their lack of education, isolated work, character of the industry, etc., only define the particular ways in which the union operates but do not fundamentally differentiate the members from those in other unions.

Is it possible to raise the membership expectations of Hoffa? Or must he be restrained from the outside? There are some who think neither of these alternatives is the answer but that the solution is in raising Hoffa's level of aspirations. I am dubious about this last possibility. Hoffa's only real interest is the economic role of the teamsters' union and the power he derives from it. Never in any conversation has Hoffa displayed any concern except for the very narrowest of worlds. Within those worlds, he's enormously knowledgeable; outside them very ignorant, although obviously capable of learning quickly. But he evinces no real desire either to broaden his intellectual horizons or change many of his basic attitudes.

VI

What does the future hold for Hoffa and the teamsters? Predictions are always dangerous but assuming that Hoffa retains his leadership of the union either overtly or covertly, the teamsters should continue to grow faster than many other unions. The American industrial economy is changing rapidly. Automation is replacing large-scale worker production of goods while the work force in the service and distributive trades is increasing. Unions like steel, auto and rubber, dependent on mass production industries, will decline in membership while the teamsters, organized more on the pattern of the English general union, has the opportunity of growth.

While I was in Detroit with the CBS television crew, I heard Hoffa speak to a group of city employees from Dearborn, Michigan, who were attempting to organize a teamster local there. I sat in the rear of the room watching Hoffa assure them of his support and thinking how curious it was that a group of city employees, generally a conservative group, would come to Hoffa and the teamsters in the face of the

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violent public attacks upon the union. Then I realized that these city employees were mad, damn mad, at their employer and I remembered, from my own experience as a union organizer, that when workers are angry enough voluntarily to organize themselves, at some risk to their jobs, what they seek in a union leader is, above all, the quality of toughness, so important in the American tradition. They want a union leader who, they believe, can solve their particular problems with their employer now, not one concerned with world affairs. It is precisely because Hoffa reflects the narrow but very sharp demands of American workers that his thundering against employers sounds like the rumbles of the class war. However, like a summer storm, far off in the distance, the sound is an illusion—to Hoffa, and his members, the class war is only a short engagement, occasionally violent, fought with no weapons barred, no quarter asked or given but quickly ended by the signing of a new contract.

Thus workers come to Hoffa and they will probably continue coming to Hoffa, for Hoffa, without social concepts, is at least as much in the tradition of the successful American labor leader as is Reuther, with his deep concern for abstract ideas of justice.

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the teamsters' union Hoffa might be reelected. Perhaps so. A strong commitment to democracy need not rest on any simple-minded "rank and filism"; it need not depend on the asumption that the members are always wise and virtuous, or the results of democratic procedure always good. All one can say in regard to Jacobs' point—but it seems the essence of the matter—is that with democracy improvement and growth remains possible; without it, not. Hoffa might win in a free election; the same might even be said of other, more important dictators in this world. Yet one would dearly like to see them put to this test.

Problems like these—they could be piled up indefinitely—warrant our speaking of a moral crisis in the labor movement. And nothing can solve this crisis except a resurgence of critical intelligence, social idealism, democratic participation: in short, a growth of consciousness. I. H.

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THE UAW: LIMITATIONS OF UNIONISM

B. J. Widick

In all factories there can be found an intense, often troubled inner life which few outsiders know much about. Negotiations, strikes, layoffs—these reach the newspapers. But the day-to-day life of a plant, where union and management find themselves at frequent odds, is in some ways more important than such melodramatic events. The following article, which tries to outline an unpublicized but quite typical situation in a large auto assembly plant in Detroit, presents details seldom found in standard writings about unionism. This is what happened . . .

One wet October morning the telephone at the foreman's desk rang. It was a call from the chairman of the shop committee. "I'm putting you in my place as committeeman," he said. "Why?" "Because," he answered, "I've been fired. I was escorted out of the plant. I'm calling from the Local." The technical grounds were insubordination.

As I kept trying to assess the impact of this event and waited for confirmation of my new status from the company's labor relations department, one thought stayed in my mind: How soon will the inevitable walk-out take place, and what will be its consequences? For in our Local it was traditional for the ranks to shut the plant whenever a union representative was fired. It was also a tradition for the company to crack down on wild-catters.

This new crisis would increase the turmoil of the past four months. We had been working without a contract because of the UAW strategy of "rock and roll" negotiations with the Big Three auto companies (that is, avoiding a major strike). The in-plant struggle had been fierce. The company, taking the offensive, had modified union representative rights, made grievance procedures stricter and pushed for higher work norms. The men had retaliated with a kind of passive resistance. Just two days ago the new contract had gone into effect, which meant—in theory—that the rules had been set down under which both sides would have to function in regard to wages, hours and conditions. But between theory and practice there was, as usual, a gap.

At a membership meeting of the Local the contract had been ratified almost unanimously. Yet the confusion among the workers was such that the very next day they had voted, under an old motion on the books, to go on strike. The contradictory character of these two decisions reflected am-

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bivalent feelings among both the ranks and the secondary leaders of the Local in regard to the value of the new contract. Now that the committee man, a well-known union veteran, had been fired, explosive sentiments were certain to burst forth.

THE NEXT MORNING: Tension everywhere in the plant. "Why don't we walk out now?" everyone keeps asking. Discretion forbids any answer, since a hint by union leaders for direct action would quickly come to the notice of the company and enable it to fire them. By noon feelings have boiled over. The men pour out of the plant and into the Local hall, with an overflow crowd packing the street. Experienced unionists know that the mere size of the crowd says a great deal about the feelings of the men.

For the Local leadership a dilemma presents itself: should it recommend that the men stay out until the committeeman is rehired or go back the next morning and try negotiating? The leadership has to bear in mind the hard fact that the contract, recently signed, is binding; it has to remember that when another local had voted to stay out in a similar crisis last spring, the company involved had obtained an injunction, sued for damages unless the contract was immediately honored, and thus forced the leadership of that local to retreat.

There seems no alternative but to return to work. The company has already informed the Local that it expects the men back at the job the following day and that there will be no negotiations on the discharge of the committeeman unless work is resumed. The company has still another card up its sleeve. It can insist that the Local go through regular grievance procedure in this case and let the Umpire between union and management rule on the proper penalty. This does not strike us as a happy possibility, since in the past the Umpire has tended to favor the union on matters of wages and seniority but was harsh on matters affecting plant discipline.

Reluctantly, the men accept explanations along the above lines and agree to go back to work. Accepting an explanation and believing it, however, are two different things.

A FEW DAYS LATER: Another, more serious explosion has just occurred. One of the major aggravating policies of the corporation—tested out in our plant—has been the introduction of a five-stage penalty system against any employee failing to meet work standards dictated by management. First a warning; then a day off; then three days off; and finally a ten-day suspension. "Come back anytime in the ten days you want to do the work. If not, you're automatically fired. If you come back and don't meet the standard, you're also fired."

Management refused to bargain on this procedure, claiming that it held the prerogative to set rules of discipline. If the union thought management was wrong, it could write grievances. The union representatives had warned management that the result of this procedure could only be: a) to cause the men to feel that the union was helpless; b) to decide, consequently, that they had to take things into their own hands. The warning was brushed aside.

Today the inevitable explosion followed. I was at the labor relations office arguing in behalf of the discharged committeeman when the phone rang. As soon as the labor relations man picked up the receiver,

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I could hear the angry noises. "You'd better get over to the trim shop," he said. "There's serious trouble there." Union representatives have the duty of getting to trouble spots to see if they can settle problems and keep the men on the job.

As I walked into the trim shop, I noticed three riot squad cars of city police near the plant. The plant protection men at the gates were all tensed up. The boos and roars grew louder and louder. When the men saw the Local president and myself, they jeered still more. They felt that the union would simply tell them to go back to work while the problem was being negotiated; and they were sick of that. For a while I couldn't even find out what had happened: they were too mad, cursing the company, cursing the union.

Quietly I kept asking, "Tell me what happened. I can't do anything until I know what it's all about." Finally they calmed down a little and told me: The company had ordered one man into the office to be penalized for not meeting the work standards, and the whole assembly line marched in behind him. As they reached the office, the new plant manager appeared, purely by coincidence. He was the man who was being blamed for the suddenly toughened company policies, and his appearance nearly provoked a riot.

This swift, violent and utterly spontaneous demonstration had thrown management off balance. Foremen stood helplessly on the side. No one knew what to do, no one expected the men to go back to work. Finally, a top company official said to me in front of the men, "Tell them to go home." This ludicrous suggestion snapped my own tension and I broke out laughing. "That's not *my* job," I said. "I'd be accused of leading a wildcat. How dumb do you think we are?"

As word of the exchange spread through the crowd, more people began to laugh. And unless someone made the mistake of calling in the city cops, I knew the situation was again under control. Another top official of the company stepped into the crowd and told the men, "We are asking you to go home, while we negotiate with your union." The Local president nodded in agreement, and soon the plant was cleared. All afternoon the union waited for the meeting, but company higher-ups decided not to negotiate because a wild-cat was involved. The next day, one of the leaders of the demonstration in the trim shop was fired, others penalized.

Again the tension became unbearable. Unless we had positive assurance that the company penalties would be modified sooner or later, another eruption would obviously break out. Fortunately, the top company officials became convinced of this and indicated that if the plant continued work there would be redress of the penalties. When this information was given to the men on the line, it was accepted and a sort of armed truce followed.

II

But the plant did not return to normal after these incidents, not even six months later. The near-riot in the trim shop was just the beginning of a grim struggle on the speedup issue, which in auto plants is never-ending. What exacerbated the struggle in our plant was the fact that the relatively easy work standards of the war years had been carried over into the postwar years, partly because of the militancy of our Local, partly because the international union "tolerated" the tactics we had used to maintain

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what were among the best working conditions in the industry. Now, however, that the corporation had suffered two bad years in 1957 and 1958, it began a major shake-up in its plant management, replacing the "softs," those officials whom the union had mellowed, with a new and tougher kind of organization man. The corporation now insisted that under no circumstances were wild-cats to be tolerated in its plants.

A few days later the company returned to the offensive again and tried to put into effect the five-point penalty system which the workers hated so much. The company told the union which group of workers in the plant would be subject to special surveillance, as a test of its penalty system, and it warned in advance that slowdowns would not be tolerated.

Quite by accident a union official now remembered a memorandum signed by the international union and the corporation to clarify the issue of how to settle disputes over work standards. During the recent disputes management kept insisting that it had the right to set standards, and that the union could challenge the subsequent rates of production which the company called for under these standards. In practice, however, no one quite knew what this meant. The forgotten memorandum provided that if the union was dissatisfied with the work load given an individual whom management was threatening to fire under the usual charge of "slowdown," the union could bring its own time study man to make a work analysis. Meanwhile, the company was bound not to impose any penalties on the workers involved.

At first the company refused to admit that such a memorandum existed, but a quick call to top officials at the UAW office forced it to agree that it had actually signed such a document a year ago. When the UAW "industrial engineer" came to the plant to check the company's claim, he concluded that the work load for which the company had said six teams were sufficient really needed seven. In other words, there had been no "slowdown." The company was then forced to retreat, and from that moment on it was more careful about imposing arbitrary standards or making quick use of the penalty system. The men, for their part, began to feel that perhaps there was an answer to the constant drive for greater production through harsh discipline and speedup.

Now, ORDINARILY, developments of this kind—guerrilla in-fighting followed by a truce of sorts—would tend to normalize relations in the plant. Emotions would have been discharged, small but galling problems settled, and the ordinary rhythm of plant life resumed. But these were unusual times in the life of both the plant and the union.

The ranks were irritated because the company was slow in returning the discharged committeeman to work. Even more troubling were the fears many men had of a lay-off. Once this plant had 14,000 workers. Production cut-backs, decentralization and automation had reduced the membership to less than 3500. With a kind of obtuse wilfulness, the company insisted on scheduling production according to the flow of orders. Sometimes this meant a four-day week, other times a six-day week. Particularly acute was the problem of Saturday overtime. When the company first announced there would be work on Saturdays, the unemployed members of the Local, as part of a city-wide movement,

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announced plans to picket the plant. Under a section of the contract which gives management the exclusive right to direct its work force, the company was legally entitled to schedule Saturday overtime. But many of us in the plant felt heartsick at the thought of being forced to come to work and finding our unemployed union brothers picketing the gates. All sections of the UAW protested the wisdom of such schedules; but to no avail.

The plant was scheduled for Saturday work, and the unemployed members of the Local were there in force. Union officials protested that it might be a personal hazard to pass the picket line and asked the company if it would assume liability for damages in case of a riot. The unemployed demonstration succeeded; the workers remained out of the plant. A week later the company obtained a court injunction to stop picketing, but it also changed its schedule to eliminate Saturday work. So that problem was settled.

At this point the company and the union began formal negotiations on the so-called strike issues within the framework of the new contract. I should explain that these strike issues were unresolved grievances which were left over from the master nation-wide agreement signed some months earlier. The international union had granted the Local the right to strike if the grievances could not be settled. And of course the truculent, erratic behavior of the company had gone far toward encouraging strike sentiments in the ranks.

The Local leadership now found itself under a terrible strain. Meetings of the stewards, the membership, the executive board—all were distinguished by acrimonious debate, personal recrimination, general blowing-off of steam. In the shop all the "outs," those who had been defeated in the last Local election, kept tending the factional fires. The louder the critic, the more attention he received. And the frustrated and harassed Local leadership had to remember that elections were only fourth months away.

The temptation to strike as an answer to the problems of the shop was overwhelming. Militant speeches were a dime a dozen. Memories of 1937—the heroic period of our Local, which functions in our folk-lore somewhat like the American Revolution—were passionately invoked. But the difficulty was that 1957 was not 1937. A strike now would have to take place within the framework of the contract, signed for three years, and adjustments would therefore be confined to the so-called strike issues such as speed-up, foremen working, relief time and the rehiring of the discharged committeeman.

A COLD-BLOODED ANALYSIS showed that this time the company had a good many advantages. One of its major suppliers was itself closed by a strike, so that a shutdown now would have little adverse effect on our company—for that matter, it wouldn't mind closing for a while to avoid paying unemployment benefits. Sales were just fair. Short weeks were being scheduled. The company figured that if it gave some concessions—alleviation on relief time, elimination of foremen working, redress on a few wage classifications—it could afford to stand firm on work standards, perhaps the most important issue in dispute.

For the union the basic difficulty was that while it could get some concessions without a strike, this would not remove the resentments accumulated among the men during the past

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months, nor would it soften the work standards achieved by the corporation. But we also realized that, judging by settlements in other plants, it was unlikely that a strike could bring better results. So negotiations dragged on for weeks. Most of the union negotiators tried the tactics of the good old days, threatening strike, talking militant; but the extremely able company negotiators were not moved an inch.

In reality this was part of a very significant and, in some respects, ominous process of "educating" the Local negotiators that old-fashioned, tub-thumping bargaining was permanently out of the window. Hard facts and cold logic would carry more weight than vitriolic displays in the 1937 tradition. In this context, the Local negotiators began to feel frustrated. Their political positions in the Local became endangered, since the "outs" were exploiting the inability of the leadership to make quick and major progress.

At this point capable international UAW bargainers entered the picture and immediately won a closer hearing from the company, which is inclined by considerations of prestige, and prefers for reasons of policy, to deal with the international rather than with the Local. Furthermore, the union received a break because it appeared that the supplier's strike would be settled and our company would now have greater reason for avoiding a strike of its own. Top negotiators for both sides entered the discussions, and it seemed that an agreement was within sight.

BUT MEANWHILE two other burning issues in the plant have to be glanced at. (I realize that for the reader these details may seem very localized, but it is only by at least noticing them that I can show you something of the actual texture of day-to-day life in the plant and the union.)

Before automation and decentralization had struck this plant, it had over 1200 machine shop and motor line workers. When this work was transferred to a new automated plant, only about half the number of men were needed for the same amount of production. Over 500 workers, with high seniority, were thus left out in the street. Unfortunately, in a plant-wide referendum two years ago the membership of the Local had voted down a plan for seniority on a plant-wide basis. Young people comprised the majority of the men and they thought at the time they would do better for themselves if seniority were arranged on a departmental or area basis.

In response to this tragic situation, the international union adopted a policy of broadening seniority through a nation-wide agreement, and this became part of a new contract to go into effect in January 1959. The company, in turn, had agreed to a scheme for rehiring the old-timers. Naturally, the workers with ten years seniority—the *youngest* in the plant—didn't feel too happy about this union achievement, even if it helped break the log-jam of negotiations, since it obviously threatened their own employment, immediately or potentially. Critics of the Local administration charged, with some show of plausibility, that the union had been placed in the position of deciding who would starve first. What the ranks wanted was jobs for all; but this was precisely what could not be achieved on a local basis. When Walter Reuther announced his plan for an unemployed march on Washington, this provided some relief from the pressures of the men, if only because it placed the issue of jobs in a proper focus. But some grumbling re-

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mained, and when over 25 per cent of the rehired old-timers couldn't keep up with the pace on the line, the issue of work standards was rendered still more acute.

The second side issue concerned the proper proportion of stewards to the rank and file workers in the plant. The in-plant arrangements still reflected divisions agreed upon when it had employed 14,000 workers. Some chief steward areas had been reduced to less than 20 men, others still had over 600. The over-all figure was impossible to justify, as everyone knew.

Fortunately the chairman of the shop committee came up with a scheme the company had to accept. It kept the ratio of one chief steward to about 150 persons and balanced out the divisions. But it also signified the loss of seven full-time stewards, thus involving an issue of patronage in the Local. Though perhaps the best set-up in the industry, it was very reluctantly accepted by the Local leadership. In the ranks it became a political football, damaging the prestige of the negotiators.

After 50 days of negotiations the company came in with a final offer which included the return of the fired committeeman. This offer represented, roughly, the minimum that the union could accept without risking a strike whose outcome would be extremely doubtful. Because the UAW is a union with democratic procedures, the final decision was left to the Local negotiators. As usual, part of the leadership was torn by doubts—a feeling heightened by the fact that Local elections were now only six weeks away. Its choice was to accept an agreement which many of the men would grumble about, or to decide upon a strike with the knowledge that in regard to the main issue—work standards—the company need not budge beyond its obligations under the contract.

In the plant there was still more uncertainty and confusion, fanned of course by the usual "politics" of local unionism. When the Local then held its meeing to discuss the agreement, what should have been a useful educational discussion in which the ranks would be enabled to see that we were engaged in a holding operation forced on us by the recession, was turned into a minor brawl. Under pressure of organized booing and increasingly hostile questions, the Local negotiators wavered, and the potential value of the settlement as a step toward rebuilding a solid local was dissipated. The agreement was accepted by a close vote, amid noise, catcalls and disorder. For the two-thirds of the membership that hadn't even shown up, the exaggerated reports of the poorly-handled meeting confirmed their cynicism.

Hard times usually signify a change in local union leadership unless it remains united, educates the membership on its problems, and offers a comprehensible and constructive program. But this time there were too many bitter feelings, too much anxiety over personal fates and prestige, and so the ranks voted the most vehement critic into the Local presidency. That such a change can solve problems which, by their nature, are beyond the control of the Local or even the UAW as a whole, may well be doubted. Meanwhile, a battered Local, with most of its membership lost and consumed by primitive factionalism, faces not only an uncertain future but an increasing skepticism within its membership.

FOR THE MEN and women in the shop, the kind of brutal experience they

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have gone through during the past few years—suffering as they have from the effects of a changing industry, an anti-labor climate, the difficulty faced by the union in solving problems on a purely economic level—has led to a growing sense of insecurity and a kind of personal disorientation which will take a long time to overcome.

What lessons can be suggested? Obviously, the whole future of industrial unionism is, to one or another extent, involved here. But let me, just by way of conclusion, suggest a few points:

1) The effects of a sudden change in the socio-technological structure of an industry are sometimes more severe in a union which remains essentially democratic than in a union run by a boss. In the absence of democracy, decisions are simply made, for good or bad. But when there is freedom of expression for the ranks and the leadership has neither ideas for solving such problems nor the power to do so, the result can be a magnification of panic. This, of course, is not meant as an argument against union democracy; only as a comment on its occasional cost. It can also be argued that a union leadership which adjusts intelligently to a new economic situation, can give greater depth and meaning to the democratic process.

2) The UAW is not to be blamed of course for the crisis created by socio-technical changes and the recession. But it is open to criticism on the ground that during the past decade or more it fostered an atmosphere of complacence in the ranks, so that many members gradually developed a blind faith in the union's powers. Had the union done more to prepare the membership for the crisis ahead, had it not so thoroughly joined in the prevalent post-war ideology that basic social problems were being solved by American capitalist society, there would not now be so extreme a reaction among the workers when they discover the drastic limitations of unionism. Some reaction there would still be; nothing can persuade workers to "like" or "accept" or even "understand" the kind of situation in which many UAW members now find themselves. But at least there would be a better comprehension, and less blind resentment often turning against the union itself.

3) The recent developments which have struck a hard blow at sections of the UAW are neither unique nor the last of their kind. Quite the contrary. They will be reenacted whenever quick technological changes occur in an economy geared fundamentally to maximum profits, not human well-being. The men in the Local are victims of social forces they neither control nor understand, and this tends to aggravate their bewilderment and suffering. But in the present national atmosphere, it is also important to remember that to analyze and stress the limitations of unionism—limitations even in the best of unions—is not to assent for a minute to current anti-union moods. Unions may not be enough, they have their serious limitations; but for the men who work in the shops they remain indispensable, a major weapon in the struggle for a decent life.

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LITTLE LABOR: THE FORGOTTEN UNIONS

Sidney Lens

There has been much talk in recent years about Big Labor, some of it warranted and some of it malicious; but almost no one has paid any attention to the scores of small unions which, quietly and persistently, continue to struggle for an improvement in the conditions of American workers. Often it is a struggle against unequal odds.

Union strength in America is concentrated in manufacturing, mining, construction, transport and public utilities. Of the 2.8 million in transport and the 2.4 million in construction eighty per cent are organized. Seventy-five per cent of American miners carry union cards. But of the twenty-six million people in wholesale, retail, finance and the services industries, as well as in government, only 1.7 million—perhaps seven per cent—are union members. Of the nation's agricultural workers less than one-half of one per cent are in unions.

What makes this picture even more unfavorable for the union movement is the consistent shift of the labor force away from organized industries to the unorganized. In the early part of 1957 the federal government reported that for the first time in American history the number of people employed in the production of goods was fewer than those in the so-called non-productive industries—government, trade, services, finances, utilities, transport. The labor movement, it may be concluded, is strongly entrenched in industries that are relatively contracting, and has hardly a foothold in those that are expanding.

Along with powerful unions are the painfully weak ones, unions that have organized only a minute part of their jurisdiction. A striking example is the Agricultural Workers' Union, headed by H. L. Mitchell. Though there were some two million organizable employees in this field, his union paid per capita tax for little over 4,000 members in 1957. His own salary of $5,433 (in sharp contrast to that of McDonald, Hoffa or Meany) reflects the general poverty and impotence of the agricultural workers.

Mitchell's problem is not that he faces small, decentralized employers with only a few workers each. On the contrary, agriculture is rapidly becoming a "factory in the field." In California, citrus fruit is a billion dollar industry, employing a half million wage earners, selling $3 billion worth of products and paying over $500 million in wages. In its packing plants are 130,000 men and women, working on highly mech-

NOTE: The material in this article has been adapted, with permission of the publisher, from Mr. Lens' recent book, *The Crisis of the Labor Movement*, published this year by Sagamore Press.

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anized, and in many instances, automated equipment. Even the 400,000 field hands increasingly work with machinery. In lettuce and asparagus harvesting, conveyor belts are used for assembling and packing. The corporations that own land include some of the nation's biggest firms. Standard Oil and Southern Pacific Railroad together own 123,492 acres. The Kern Land Company owns 231,000 acres. In San Joaquin Valley alone thirty corporations own more than 5,000 acres each.

Many years ago the La Follette Senate Investigating Committee said of the California State Chamber of Commerce that it was "equivalent to a top holding company of employers' associations in industrialized agriculture." This united employer force has been successful in warding off all efforts to organize its field hands even though they usually earn below $1 an hour. Twenty years ago when the AFL Citrus Packing House Workers attempted organization, the owners assessed themselves a fixed amount on each carload of shipped products to fight the union. In the early thirties the Communists made an effort at organization through their Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union, but their efforts collapsed after eighteen of the union's leaders were arrested and charged with "criminal syndicalism" in July 1934. Three years later a CIO union emerged, but it had little more success. The teamsters have organized some cannery workers, but the overwhelming majority of the field hands are without union protection. They are not covered by the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act, although the industry is centralized and interstate in scope. The Packinghouse Union tried to unionize the Sunkist growers beginning in 1954 but found itself bogged down when the employers refused to bargain. It has been fighting in the courts for more than three years to win contracts for five of the 132 Sunkist plants, but so far without success.

The situation has improved very little since John Steinbeck wrote years ago that "the large growers' groups have found the law inadequate to their uses; and they have become so powerful that such charges as felonious assault, mayhem and inciting to riot, kidnapping and flogging cannot be brought against them in the controlled courts. . . ." By now there may be less open violence, but the conditions of the migrant workers remain appalling. The *Miami Daily News* on February 22, 1958 reported that "whole families are forced to live in the open. . . . Many are making homes in cardboard and other kind of makeshift shacks in the woods. . . ." The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* on January 12, 1958 noted that "literally thousands of farm families in the 'Mississippi bottoms' area are hungry and facing starvation unless help comes quickly. . . ." The *San Jose Mercury,* having made a survey of the California migrant camps, described them on January 23, 1958 as the "longest slum in the world . . . village conditions in Pakistan no worse than some of the California camps . . . migratory families living under conditions similar to refugees in Seoul (Korea). . . ." This is a chapter in the labor story that is seldom publicized. Yet there are three times as many organizable agricultural workers as there are basic auto workers in the UAW. The impotence of unionism in agriculture and its frustrations are typical of those of Little Labor.

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II

Another important example is in the textile industry which employs 962,000 production workers. This is certainly one of the major industries in the country, yet the Textile Workers' Union, once a major force in the CIO, has shrunk to a mere 190,000. There is another textile union, formerly in the AFL, but it claims only 40,000 members and probably is even smaller. Between the two, therefore, less than twenty-five per cent of the nation's textile workers are unionized. In 1956 their average hourly wage, both North and South, skilled and unskilled combined, was only $1.45.

Great textile strikes were led by the I.W.W. in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912 and in Paterson, New Jersey in 1913. The Communists conducted bitter walkouts against extreme exploitation in Passaic, New Jersey in 1926 and Gastonia, North Carolina in 1929. Neither these nor similar efforts struck roots. In the autumn of 1934, 475,000 workers responded to a call for a national textile strike; but the strike ended indecisively at the request of President Roosevelt. By 1937 the CIO Textile Workers' Organizing Committee, successor to the old union, had initiated a spirited campaign and won contracts for 160,000 of the mill hands. In 1940 the union reported a membership of 314,000 and in 1943, 400,000. But, despite the general growth of unionism in the following fifteen years, the textile union suffered a catastrophic decline. It lost half its membership. It was unable to overcome the combined opposition of the mills, moving to the Southern states, the right-to-work laws in most of those states, and persistent harassment and terrorism.

In August 1957 the South Carolina General Assembly approved six ordinances which required "a permit in writing" before any union organizer could solicit members. In Baxley, Georgia annual union license fees were enacted costing $2,000, plus $500 for "each member signed up." In nearby Carrollton organizers were required to pay $100 a day for the privilege of "doing business" and in Osceola, Arkansas $1,000 a day. At Darlington, South Carolina, after the textile union had won an election for the 600 workers employed by one of the biggest textile chains, Deering, Milliken, the company merely suspended operations rather than bargain with the legally-chosen representatives of its employees.

In Fredericksburg, Virginia—to cite another example—the textile union won an election for more than 300 employees in September, 1957, but after negotiating until the following January the company involved summarily discharged the forty-two members of the union committee and forced the employees out on strike to defend their leaders. From the first day of the strike the majority of the town's police force showed up at the plant and distributed leaflets to the strikers reproducing sections of the state's right-to-work law that makes picketing virtually impossible near plant entrances and prevents strikers from talking to strikebreakers. Though the union finally offered to go back to work without a wage increase if the company would reinstate the union leaders, management refused. Unless some concerted effort is made by the whole labor movement on the scale of the 1935-38 effort of the CIO, unionism in textile seems doomed to many more years of impotence and frustration. These are facts that the average literate per-

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son, even the one who is socially conscious, seldom knows about.

The newspapers headline the victories and emphasize the power of the successful big unions, but seldom point up the maddening discouragements of Little Labor. The American Federation of Technical Engineers, with 11,586 members, has only five full time organizers on its national payroll and four more on its local union staffs. In the last three years it has added about 1,000 engineers, draftsmen, technicians and researchers a year to its rolls but there are 600,000 technical engineers still unorganized. The American Federation of Government Employees has a membership of 55,708 out of a white collar potential of 950,000. It too can afford only five full time organizers. The American Federation of Teachers has only four staff organizers and a membership of less than 50,000 out of a national teaching staff of one and a half to two million. In one year it lost 2,500 members below the Mason-Dixon line because the local unions there refused to desegregate.

III

The construction workers who organized into unions in the nineteenth century had the advantage of being skilled men who were not easily replaced. The mass production workers who joined the CIO in 1935-38 had the advantage that they were clustered in large groups and could stop production completely by merely refusing to work. But the twenty-six million workers in trade, government, agriculture, service, and white collar fields do not have these economic advantages. Most are unskilled and easily replaced in case of a strike. Government workers, unlike their counterparts in most West European nations, are often prohibited from striking by law, and at any rate by custom. They must confine their union efforts to lobbying with legislators. The economic power of office workers is slight because they have only a secondary and tertiary effect on production. Supervisors can do their work, particularly for short periods. This, together with certain familiar psychological patterns, helps explain why unionization efforts among these groups have floundered for many decades.

There are in the U.S. some eight and a half million organized electrical workers, but the Office Employees' International Union has a membership of only 44,647 and two insurance unions number less than 20,000. It is only where a strong blue collar union tries to enroll its white collar brothers that there is a modicum of success. The auto workers have unionized 90,000 members in this category, steelworkers 40,000, and three other large unions perhaps another hundred thousand. But Little Labor has been batting its head against a stone wall, with only minor progress.

In 1958 Jimmy Hoffa announced a joint campaign with the office union by which the stock clerks and "pickup" deliverymen would be enrolled in the teamsters while the clerical help would go to the smaller union. Optimistic estimates of the number of workers to be unionized were given the press, but—even assuming that the office union can violate AFL-CIO policy and collaborate with the teamsters—it remains to be seen how far this drive will go. Similar joint drives with the teamsters by the butchers' union were highly unsatisfactory.

In the 1951-52 insurance agents' strike at Prudential, the teamsters

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respected the picket lines of their white collar brothers and refused to deliver heating oil to the company's headquarters in New Jersey. But the management chartered some barges, transferred the oil to gangster-driven trucks with covered licensed plates and brought the fuel in under police escort. The big firm was more than a match for the tiny union, even though the agents received substantial financial and picket aid from the teamsters, seamen, and ladies garment unions.

In 1929 salaried workers earned thirty per cent more than manual workers. But by 1943 they were left far behind. As *Business Week* put it: "In manufacturing, the salaried workers' wage advantage has disappeared. It may be gone forever. . . . The white-collar is no longer the badge of respectability, and now it's lost its edge in income." Yet, despite this visible evidence that unionism has paid handsomely to the blue-collar worker, the office employee still stands aloof. In part this is the result of the realization that white collar strikes are difficult to win. In part it is the result of a feeling of status, and identification with management to a degree unknown among factory workers. But whatever the cause, the fact remains that there is a very significant disparity in the strength of the tiny unions in the white collar field and the goliaths of management they must deal with. Multi-billion dollar banks like Chase-Manhattan or multi-billion dollar insurance companies like Metropolitan or Prudential are obviously more than a match for a union with 44,647 members.

IV

Little Labor also struggles along at a considerable disadvantage in retail shops and department stores. There are approximately eight million workers in this field, (more than half as many as in all manufacturing put together) but only a half million, or seven per cent, carry union cards—and of these, 280,000 are in the food stores. A quarter of a century ago the average retail worker earned twenty per cent more than the factory hand. By 1952 the factory worker earned thirty-four per cent more than his retail brother, $82 a week against $61. Hundreds of thousands of retail workers didn't even do that well. The average wage in general merchandising and department stores was only $45 a week.

The story of retail unionism in the United States is a story of persistent hardships and painfully slow progress. The largest union in this field, the Retail Clerks International Association boasts 291,000 members. RCIA has made steady gains since 1941, when its ranks numbered only 85,000, but again its successes have been primarily in the food store field where it had some roots to begin with. In the department stores it has netted only meager results, claiming to represent some 40,000 workers. Its impotence was clearly illustrated when in early 1958 it came to grips with the large mail order house, Montgomery Ward. The company refused to grant a wage increase to RCIA, and after months of maneuvering, the union went on strike in a handful of stores while putting pickets around scores of others to enforce a boycott. The union came to terms only when the teamsters signed a five year pact with the company. Hoffa's union saved it from ignominious defeat by insisting that Ward's agree to the same pact with the clerks' union.

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Little Labor faces the same difficulties in regard to the retail and white collar fields that auto, steel, rubber and other unions faced in mass production industries a generation ago. It just can't make a break-through.

V

The total number of small, relatively weak unions in the United States is far larger than most people realize. When speaking of the labor movement it is customary to refer to the AFL-CIO as a single body of 13.5 million members. But AFL-CIO is merely a federation of some 135 autonomous national unions. It is the propaganda and lobbying voice of the movement but it has no mandatory powers over its affiliates in such decisive matters as strikes, collective bargaining, grievance machinery, or even political action.

Since its formation the AFL-CIO has centralized power to a significant extent, particularly in the enforcement of ethical practices. It has expelled unions from its ranks whom it considered to be corrupt and it has appointed "monitors" over such unions as the distillery workers when it felt they needed supervision. But the center of power is still the autonomous national union. Of these there are only nine with more than 400,000 members and only twenty with more than 200,000. At the other end of the pole are such midgets as the Asbestos Workers, 10,000; Bill Posters, 1,600; Brick and Clay Workers, 25,123; Broadcast Workers, 3,738; Cement, Lime and Gypsum Workers, 35,288; Cigarmakers, 8,038; Coopers, 4,012; Doll and Toy Workers, 16,980; Window Glass Cutters, 1,600; Horse Shoers, only 266; Hosiery Workers, 9,917; Glove Workers, 3,063. A well-known unionist such as AFL-CIO Vice-President A. Philip Randolph of the Sleeping Car Porters, heads an organization of only 10,000 members.

Each of the national unions lives in its own separate world. Few, if any, are the invincible goliaths often pictured in the press. Its day to day activity is restricted to relatively simple problems, covering small numbers of people—and monumental difficulties.

Two issues of the *Hosiery Worker,* January and February 1958, may give some inkling as to the scope of that activity. A report on finances indicates that the Hosiery Union had assets as of December 31, 1957 of $269,167 of which a mere $6,000 was in cash. The President, Alex McKeon, head of the organization for eighteen years, earned $6,500 a year. Employment seems to weigh heavily on the minds of the hosiery workers because their newspaper reports a decline of 3,200 workers in the North Carolina full-fashioned hosiery mills. There were 21,000 in December 1957 as against 24,200 the year before. Average wages also fell, from $1.56 an hour to $1.54. On the more hopeful side, the paper lists a one per cent gain in employment at the seamless mills, and a rise in wages from $1.38 to $1.42 an hour. The paper notes that the "Do Not Buy" Chadbourn Gotham hosiery campaign is picking up. That would indicate that it had lost a strike or organizing drive there and has fallen back on the boycott as a last resort. A strike of full-fashioned knitters at the Morton Hosiery Mills in Runnemede, New Jersey is also reported. The company reduced the knitters rate of pay and changed their work week to six days, six hours. The employees spontaneously refused to work, joined the hosiery union, and petitioned the Labor Board for an election. So far,

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we are told, the company has refused to consent. In another column the story is told of the Wytheville Knitting Mills in Virginia, where the union, after an election, was certified as the bargaining agent on December 8, 1955, but where the company has refused to negotiate a contract ever since.

Issues of the *Chemical Worker,* organ of a medium sized union with 71,688 members, list similar problems: The union has helped twenty workers at the Summers Fertilizer Company in Maine "bust a company union" and regain their jobs. This campaign has been going on for two and a half years, since the workers were discharged, but the Labor Board has now ruled in their favor and they stand to collect several thousand dollars apiece. The company, however, is still fighting the issue in the courts and it may well be another year—perhaps two or three—before the matter is resolved. Another item gives details of the Koppers strike in Kearny, New Jersey. Forty-five members of the union have been picketing this Mellon subsidiary for eleven weeks because management insisted on transferring high seniority employees to lower paying jobs, at its own discretion. "It ended," says *Chemical Worker,* "when management DID budge and granted security provisions which covered thirty-four men in the work force."

None of this is on a big scale or indicates any tremendous power. The union's jurisdiction, if federal statistics are accurate, covers at least 555,000 workers; but it realizes only a fraction of its potential. Such giant firms as DuPont have completely eluded its grasp. One of the interesting sidelights in the newspaper is the plea that each local union "adopt a plant"—organize an unorganized shop. This is Little Labor at its typical pace, fighting hard against insuperable odds, trying desperately to hold on, hoping for the great day when perhaps there will be a new swing toward unionism.

VI

Our traditional American culture is so enamored of bigness that it seldom puts the spotlight on littleness. But not only is there a large segment of the labor movement that is in the little category, but Big Labor itself is often, in truth, only a veneer over something essentially little, weak, tenuous. The international unions of autoworkers, teamsters, steelworkers, etc. are centralized, powerful, big. They have taken over many of the tasks, such as collective bargaining and general servicing, which formerly were handled at the grass roots. But the local union still has a certain area of small, nerve-wracking activity. There are some 75,000 local unions in the labor movement, tens of thousands of them—even in the big national organizations—that cannot afford a full-time organizer, sometimes not even a full-time office girl. Glen W. Miller and Edward J. Stockton made a study a year or two ago of the local union officer and his background, activities and attitudes. Polling 291 such officers in the Columbus, Ohio area they found in most cases they received less than $25 a month and regard their work as a "labor of love." On the average they spent eight hours a week doing the odd jobs involved in running their union—after finishing their work in the factory.

The tasks these and other men handled were the small problems that never get publicity. A worker is classified as a machinist but is doing tool-

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and-die work, rating a higher wage scale. The grievance committeeman takes the problem up to the department supervisor and tries to adjust it. If the company is adamant he arranges for a grievance meeting of his whole committee with the industrial relations manager and attempts to resolve it at this "second stage." If that is unsuccessful the matter goes to his international representative and is processed further, through arbitration, by the national organization. Or,—a member has taken a leave of absence for pregnancy and has overstayed her leave by three days. The committeeman tries to make a deal with the supervisor to overlook this trangression and reinstate the woman with her full seniority.

At this level, the leaders of Little Labor are busy day and night trying to mobilize their members to come to meetings; busy attending conferences of their city-wide industrial union council, participating in minor political action, collecting $1 from members—if they can—for COPE, the political arm of AFL-CIO, and similar chores. On rare occasions they go to conventions or attend conferences out of their cities.

At this level, too, there is hardly anything that is big, rich, or corrupt. The number of corrupt union leaders that were exposed by various federal legislative committees over a recent period of five years was only forty. Their influence was, of course, far greater than their number might suggest, and should not be underplayed. But the stigma they cast certainly does not include the half million active secondary leaders of the 75,000 local unions in the country whose work on behalf of their union is primarily a "labor of love."

The mores of our times have affected this secondary echelon just as they have the rank and file worker generally or the top leadership. Ralph Helstein, President of the Packinghouse Union, spoke of this in a recent speech on "Moral Values and the Fast Buck." "How many devoted members," he asked, "will still distribute handbills unless there is a dollar or two in it for them? What of those situations where the drive for piece work earnings force people out of gangs so that those remaining can increase their earnings? . . . What about lost time practices—is it always for union business or does it provide an opportunity for a quick drink or a ball game? . . . It is my purpose to outline these practices not just to add my voice to those who condemn the few in the labor movement who indulge in the blatant behavior of a Beck, but more importantly to point up . . . the fact that the day to day actions just referred to are a form of corruption, part and parcel of the values of this commercial age. These are the kinds of practices that make ours the age of the 'fast buck,' the age where you get yours while the getting is good."

Even at the secondary levels there are officials who make a couple of pennies out of their union position. They charge the union for "lost-time" for union business when in reality they have taken the day off to go fishing. Or they take a small present from the man who installs the coffee machine in their headquarters. But these are the minority. The majority of Little Labor's leaders are self-sacrificing and idealistic. Their idealism no longer has the vision that it often had in the 1930s, but in their personal attitudes are "true believers."

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THE HARD ROAD TO UNION DEMOCRACY

Hugh Cleland

About the steel workers' union only one thing can be said with assurance: no ready-made formula will take us far on the road to understanding.

Here is an important section of the classical "proletariat"; yet in consciousness, initiative and militancy it has lagged behind many other industrial unions. The role provided for it by the Marxist scheme remains unfilled; the expectations raised by liberal desires, unsatisfied. Its leader, David J. DcDonald, seems closer to images of mass advertising than to traditions of American unionism. Pipe in hand, jaw set, profile more or less firm, he looks like the ideal homeowner to whom the bank will be pleased to extend a solid loan. By comparison Walter Reuther is the height of intellectuality, George Meany the essence of plebeian authenticity.

For a good many years the steel union functioned as a conservative force within the CIO, often on the verge of breaking away from the more "socially-conscious" unions. For a good many years McDonald, acting the role of labor statesman, collaborated closely with the very industry that now—I write in mid-summer 1959—has forced the union into a bitter strike in order, it would appear, to "teach it a lesson." And inside the union, never noted for its democratic animation, there has arisen an opposition group, the Dues Protest Committee, which seriously threatened McDonald's power in the last union election. In unions with a much richer democratic past, such as the UAW and the ILGWU, the usual opposition groups have almost completely faded away; this indeed has been a major tendency in American unionism; yet in the United Steel Workers of America there is now an opposition group that shows signs of becoming permanent.

I

The earliest iron and steel workers were either native Americans or British immigrants; but by the 1890s the steel labor force came to be drawn mainly from the new immigration: Poles, Slavs, some Italians. This meant that in steel there was now a labor force with almost no training in democratic procedures; indeed, with little possibility for communication among its component national groups. And so it would remain for several decades.

By contrast, in both auto and rubber—industries that expanded rapidly only after European immigration had been cut off by the First World War—the basic labor force came from native dirt farmers and small townsmen, often from the mountain areas of the upper South. These men sometimes brought with them remnants of

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the populist tradition; many of them were independent and individualistic in outlook; some were former coal miners who had fled the mines but remembered the union. As a rule, they made more independent, informed and combative unionists than the immigrant workers in steel. The auto and rubber workers were thrust into large cities, which meant a variety of new experiences; while most of the steel workers lived in small and isolated company towns, in which local government tended to be an extension of corporate power. These company towns did little to prepare the steel workers for being ready to take an active part in union life.

Steel has a long tradition of efforts at unionization, most of them failures, and punctuated by such dramatic conflicts as the Homestead lockout of 1892 and the 1919 strike led by William Z. Foster. When the industry finally was organized in the late thirties, the union bore the special stamp of John L. Lewis and his collaborators in the United Mine Workers (UMW). For the rising industrial unions as a whole Lewis was a veritable Samson, but in his own union he had ruthlessly crushed the opposition groups which threatened his reign during the late twenties. It was Lewis' men—Phil Murray, Van Bittner, Pat Fagan and many others—who provided the first leadership of the steel union; and even today, almost twenty years later, an important segment of the steel union's leadership stems from the UMW. These men were tough, skillful, devoted organizers; but union democracy was not one of their credos.

Still another reason for the relative poverty of the steel union's inner life is that at no point were radicals as influential as in other industrial unions. Whatever good or harm radicals have done to American unions, there can be no question that their very presence often helped stimulate internal interest, tension, controversy, the stuff upon which democracy feeds. At the beginning, there were some Communists on the staff of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC), mostly because they were able to speak the East European languages of the workers and therefore proved useful; but they were kept in strict control, and then discarded, by Lewis' men who had behind them a long and violent struggle with Communists in the coal union. Of non-Communist radicals there have not been many in steel, and their influence has never been comparable to that which they exerted some years ago in the UAW.

Most of the industrial unions came to birth through sharp strike struggles which trained a whole generation of leaders, and at least for a time, encouraged considerable rank-and-file participation. The steel union, however, won its first major victory in 1937 when Myron C. Taylor, chairman of the board of U.S. Steel, reversed the industry's open-shop policy and dramatically recognized the union. Taylor drew a shrewd accounting from the sit-downs in auto and rubber, and worked on the assumption—shared, by and large, by most of the steel industry leaders through the war and post-war years—that a policy of cozying the union leadership would make things easier for the corporations than a display of hostility. One result was that the steel workers never knew the experiences of the thirties in quite the way members of other

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CIO unions did; another result was that the many company unions which had been set up to comply with Section 7a were now absorbed. This was both necessary and desirable, but it had some unhappy consequences, since the company unions had not exactly been an ideal training school for democracy. (For that matter, six years passed between setting up SWOC and the steel union's constitutional convention in 1942.)

Not that the entire steel industry accepted unionism immediately or with good grace! When the union struck Little Steel soon after its agreement with Taylor, it went down in bloody defeat, and not until 1941, when the government intervened, did it manage to sign up such corporations as Bethlehem, Republic, Jones and Laughlin, etc.

II

David McDonald entered the steelworkers' staff from the UMW. Originally he had been hired as a stenographer by Phil Murray, when Murray was head of the Pittsburgh section of the UMW; later he studied drama at Carnegie Institute of Technology. McDonald almost quit his union post to become a movie director, something utterly inconceivable in unionists like Murray or Reuther or Meany. Neither by experience nor commitment as closely related to unionism as these other men, McDonald also knew far less than they the actualities of the life of the workers. His only direct contact with the steel industry had been a summer mill job during his teens.

When Phil Murray became head of SWOC, McDonald went along to become Secretary-Treasurer. (On the first executive board of SWOC there was not a single steel worker; liberation came to the steel workers through invasion.) During most of the time that Murray headed the steel workers he was also CIO president, and this latter post absorbed the bulk of his time and energy. In the meantime McDonald, confident of Murray's protection, ran the day-to-day affairs of the union and began to build himself a patronage machine.

So it went until 1952 when Murray, having successfully concluded the fight against the Communists in the CIO, turned his attention to his own union. There is evidence that he planned greatly to reduce McDonald's power, and at the last union convention before his death he made several cutting remarks that were clearly directed against McDonald. But shortly thereafter Murray died and the road was now clear for McDonald to become president of the United Steel Workers of America.

I have remarked that by comparison with almost every other leading figure in the CIO McDonald seems strikingly without roots, experience, conviction and strong feeling in his relation to unionism. Yet it might well be that he, rather than figures like Murray or Reuther, will provide a model of the union leader of tomorrow. Murray came from a coal-mining family; he was a devout Catholic; the principles he had, he held firmly and deeply. Trade unionism, as he understood it, was his life. Reuther, try as he may, cannot erase the evidence of a socialist background which has predisposed him to general ideas and one or another kind of idealism. But McDonald seems the prototype of the trade union leader in the mass society: the Organization Man who does his job honestly and

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with some competence but seems peculiarly lacking in flavor, individuality or principles.

McDonald rose to power because Murray and the UMW organizers were there to do the spade work; because there was not, at least until recently, any sort of serious intra-union competition; and because the steel industry recognized that, in its terms, McDonald was a "responsible" union leader. His talents are modest; his tastes run to night club opulence; unlike other union leaders, he does not aspire to middle class values, because those are the values that have always and genuinely been his. He has been intelligent enough to surround himself with an able staff, particularly Arthur Goldberg, the union's attorney who does a great deal of its negotiating and policy formulating. These people serve him well but, lacking any base in the locals, cannot threaten him.

McDonald soon cut a new figure for a CIO leader. He proclaimed that he and management constituted mutual trustees in the industry. He took a much-publicized tour of the mills with Ben Fairless to promote "industrial peace." He went out of his way to undercut Reuther's position as head of the CIO, and for a while seriously played with the idea of forming a new federation with Lewis and Dave Beck—a scheme that was frustrated by opposition from the secondary leadership of the union. Where Murray had tried to work out the practical implications of the Papal Encyclicals on labor relations, McDonald acepted at face value the much slicker and emptier notions of "trusteeship" which were being circulated during the early fifties by the conservative press.

The steel companies liked this new kind of leader and showed it at the bargaining table. McDonald won good raises from a trustified industry that could and did pass the cost on to the consumer, with interest. As *Fortune* said in August 1958, the steel industry "wants to see a strong leader at the helm in order to keep down the numerous wildcat strikes that have plagued steel. A strong leader, too, can keep down a factionalism that often encourages demagogic economic demands." (McDonald on his tours with Fairless made a special point of denouncing wildcats.) The one time, in 1956, it looked as if McDonald's luck as a bargainer had run out, Eisenhower was up for re-election and Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey stepped in to persuade the industry that it was desirable to grant a good settlement and thereby help the Republicans stay in the White House. It was that contract which expired in 1959.

III

If the industry found McDonald to its taste, there is evidence that a good number of the more active members and secondary leaders of the union did not. Often the ground for objection was not so much a programmatic one—the role of the union etc. —but an uneasiness about McDonald's "style," as I have tried to describe it. And this uneasiness, since it did point to important realities, came in time to be focused on concrete union problems.

In 1955, for example, McDonald decided to elevate to the vice-presidency of the union his boyhood chum, Howard Hague, a former credit manager for a jewelry store, never a steel worker, and with little talent

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or experience in trade unionism. Many of the district directors, led by William Hart, an old Murray man who sometimes plays the role of elder statesman in the union, opposed Hague. To them he seemed a johnny-come-lately, a slickie, a yes-man for McDonald. And though to some observers this seemed merely a personal squabble, it actually reflected deeply contrasting styles and traditions of unionism.

Hague was finally elected, but only after sluggings at the union halls where officers are chosen by referendum. For McDonald it was a rather expensive victory, since from that point on opposition sentiment has continued to develop inside the union. When he rammed through an unpopular dues increase at the 1956 convention—by a voice vote which, if nothing worse, was extremely careless (he refused a roll call)—the rank and file, so long dormant, began to stir. An opposition group, the Dues Protest Committee, began to form in some of the larger locals, especially in the Pittsburgh area.

At first everyone thought that Hart, who had occasionally opposed McDonald on the executive board, would lead the protest movement. Apparently, however, Hart and the other anti-McDonald district directors were not going to join a fight which had as its main plank opposition to a dues increase and which was directed mainly against the operating income and authority of the international staff. This would have been something like a civil servant opposing a tax increase: conceivable with some, unlikely with most.

As a result Donald Rarick, a grievance committeeman from McKeesport and until then a quite minor figure in the union, took over leadership of the opposition. Running for president against McDonald, with an ill-financed and barely-organized campaign, Rarick won over a third of the vote officially, and probably got a good deal more. It was apparent that if Hart had led the opposition, he could have won.

Today the Dues Protest Committee —loosely organized, without any full-time leadership—continues to exist and still controls some key locals in the Pittsburgh area, locals well enough established to have a tradition of "ins" and "outs" among their leaders. But the movement has lost strength. The good-natured and well-meaning Rarick is a political primitive who has been conned into supporting Republicans, endorsing right-to-work laws and trafficking with the McClellan Committee. When these actions were explained to him, he repudiated them; but he has scared away most of the serious critics of McDonald in the secondary leadership of the union. The programmatic poverty of the Rarick group is itself a reflection of the weakness of the union. That he draws support from some members who feel vague anti-union resentments seems certain; the very existence of this reservoir of feeling shows how poorly the McDonald leadership has educated the ranks. A union, as a rule, gets the kind of inner opposition it deserves.

Rarick has also hurt his cause by demanding that the pay of the union staff be cut and that international representatives be elected rather than appointed. This badly antagonized the staff, which has enough problems on its hands without running for office each year. As a result of such tactical errors, and also an almost

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complete failure to elaborate any sort of program for the union, the Dues Protest Committee was badly beaten at last year's convention. In fact, the convention recommended the expulsion of the rebels; but when trials were held in several locals, the membership overwhelmingly supported Rarick and his friends, so that there have been no expulsions thus far. McDonald has cried "dual unionism," a charge that is patently absurd.

Whatever the future of this particular opposition group may be, it has already done some good for the union. There has been a certain revival of life in a union which, like most others in America, tends to be a vast shell run by a small group of full-time officials who have to consider the membership only at such critical moments as negotiations and strikes. McDonald, frightened and chastened by the power of the opposition, has given up his Reuther-baiting and no longer talks about "trusteeship." He is trying, rather clumsily, to establish some rapport with the membership through TV and radio programs. Rarick, for his part, is learning to keep his foot out of his mouth and in recent months has supported the administration in contract negotiations. He says one of his aims is a two party system in the union, and this may now come into being.

IV

How do the various elements of the membership feel about these matters?

Steel staff pople are fond of saying that the workers are organized but not unionized. Certainly a majority take little or no active part in the union. They are often influenced by the anti-labor daily press, and have pretty well been sold the idea that wage increases must automatically be wiped out by price increases. At the same time they are worried about recessions, automation, unemployment, so that they can hardly afford to be anti-union. And they are not.

The difficulty here stems from the fact that the union as an institution has not done much to educate the members, so that they have little sense of direction and little idea of what they can do. The union apparatus is mainly a grievance-settling and raise-getting service, but you take what you get and are not consulted about it. Strikes, for example, are called and settled by the Wage Policy Committee; the members don't vote; and at the present moment, in the middle of the strike, they really don't seem to have much of an idea about what the union wants. They know what management wants—and nothing has so rallied them to the union as the suggestion that work conditions be tampered with. In other unions, like the UAW and UE, strike demands are worked out at GM or GE conferences, discussed in the locals and explained—or "sold"—to the ranks. They have to be, because in those unions the locals take strike votes. Little, if any, of this can be found in the steel union.

The active secondary leaders, men who run the locals and district committees, tend to support McDonald critically—many are ambitious for posts and honors, and it helps to have the international on your side—but a good portion of these people seem also to be sympathetic, in a somewhat distant way, to the opposition. District directors have a good deal of autonomy and maintain strong machines of their own. How many of them are hostile to Mc-

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Donald, and to what extent, is hard to say at any given time; but he does not sit in office nearly as firmly as, nor does he command the respect that is enjoyed by such men as Reuther, Carey, Lewis, or Knight.

At the moment, the mood of McDonald and his assistants is fascinating to observe. They feel that nobody loves them, and in a way they are right. The membership stays away from meetings until there is trouble and then it demands that the union immediately solve problems that may be beyond solution at a given moment. They resent a strike while negotiations are on, and criticize the settlement after it is made. To McDonald it must seem that every secondary leader wants a staff job and every man on the staff a lighter assignment.

As I write, it is too early to say; but it may be that some important changes are in the offing. The steel industry seems deliberately to have decided to draw a line, pitting its will against the desires of the union, not because it couldn't afford to give and absorb a raise, but because it wishes deliberately to check the union's power. Suddenly, McDonald, who in the past *was* treated almost like a trustee, finds himself in a situation where it is necessary to fight. Had the inner tradition of the union been a richer one, with a greater stress upon democratic participation and education, it would have been better prepared to meet the present crisis. As it is, the whole image that McDonald had constructed for himself—the amiable leader who serves as honest broker between, and enjoys the confidence of, both benevolent industrialists and grateful workers—has been shaken by reality. The repercussions that this will have within the union cannot yet be known, but it is a little hard to believe, at the moment, that things will be as glossy as they were.

P.S.—Since the above article was written, the steel union has settled down to what seems likely to be a prolonged and "principled" strike—"principled" in the sense that it clearly involves a test of strength between the industry and the nation. McDonald, it is reliably reported, has been trying to arrange a "fix" in high places, that is, to bring political pressure to bear upon management to accept a compromise. He has held several conferences with Vice President Nixon, who is known to feel that the companies can afford to give a raise without increasing prices, and, in behalf of his own political future, would like to apply a bit of pressure on them to do this. Thus far (August 20) President Eisenhower is cool to this idea, though it is not very different from what was done in 1956 to further *his* campaign.

Meanwhile, the companies are holding firm, embarked on what Paul Jacobs has called in *The Reporter* "Roger Blough's crusade" to roll back trade unionism in America. The seriousness with which Blough and his friends have undertaken this "crusade," together with the recent shocking defeats suffered by the labor movement in Congressional votes on labor reform legislation, has created a mood of genuine anxiety among the steel union leaders. It is possible that U.S. Steel may yet succeed in doing what no one before it could—convincing David McDonald that there may be something after all to the theory of class struggle.

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BOOKS

The Problems of Power

DEMOCRACY AND THE CHALLENGE OF POWER, by David Spitz. Columbia University Press, 1958. 179 pp. $5.00.

"Power" seems to have a peculiar fascination for the modern mind, in part, perhaps, because men feel entrapped by the superordinate-subordinate relations which become more ubiquitous as technological and industrial processes grow in complexity. A whole school of political thinkers has told us that "power" is the essence of politics and during the past generation studies by Bertrand Russell, Charles Merriam, and Bertrand De Jouvenel have sought to probe its anatomy and physiology. They have also endeavored to show us how it can, in the words of one writer, be "tamed." Moreover, self-criticisms by those of us who call ourselves socialists have centered in considerable measure on our alleged past deficiencies in this field.

Throughout most of his discussion, David Spitz treads familiar ground and with relative brevity. All "democratic" states, he correctly maintains, have in fact denied the legitimate rights of at least some of their citizens and have failed to make power-holders fully responsible. Moreover, private associations—whether economic, religious, or cultural—while outside the formal structure of democratic government as such, have in many instances impaired the possibility of effective control. For churches, corporations, and unions, either through their own internal undemocratic structures or through their utilization of the inevitable social power which they possess, have made it more difficult to implement democratic ideals.

What is more, all the devices which have been suggested to limit the abuses of power in so-called democratic societies are inadequate. Institutional schemes for the fragmentization and decentralization of power, such as one finds in the American political system, tend to fail: they become so complicated that governments cannot act, thus leaving crucial decisions to private power structures which are not effectively accountable to the community as a whole. True, it has been suggested that the rediscovery of "right" principles and an appeal to them might tend more nearly to make power the instrument of equity and justice. But Spitz rightly criticizes Mr. Walter Lippmann and all those who claim that they can discover and make evident such principles. "Natural law" doctrines are subjected to a criticism which, in some measure at least, they certainly deserve. And the "conserva-

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tive" appeal to "tradition" is correctly countered by the question, "Which tradition?"

But suppose we can discover what the psychologists call "democratic" personalities and then proceed to put them in positions of leadership. Would we not in this event be on the road to a solution? Here again the critic is doubtful. In the first place, our ability to discriminate between "democratic" and "authoritarian" personalities is not really very great. Secondly, even if we could somehow separate the sheep from the goats, one can legitimately ask whether "personality" is the only or even the major factor to be considered. For the structure of social and political relations has an autonomy of its own; and the person, however "democratic" he may be in terms of the psychological tests (assuming the tests are valid), will find that in a position of authority the tendency for power to corrupt is still present.

There is also a brief (too brief, in my opinion) inquiry into socialist positions, both from the viewpoint of workers' control and from the perspective of uniting "political" and "economic" power. To the former, the objection is made that full workers' control would impair "efficiency." As for the union of economic and political orders through government ownership and administration, it would perhaps make economic power publicly responsible and accountable but at the same time could greatly enhance the danger of tyranny.

SPITZ CONCLUDES by asserting the need for a reformulation of the problem. The "problem" of power, far from being a single issue, is in reality a series of problems; and democratic society is forever confronted by the quest for piecemeal rather than over-all "solutions." In the last analysis, "the question for the democratic (as for every) state is not whether or not there shall be restraints, whether or not there shall be abuses. The question is one of values, of the proper primacy or hierarchy of freedoms, and of the order or classes of men who shall enjoy or be denied these freedoms, or some of them. Conversely, it is a question of which restraints or oppressive measures men are willing to accept the better to eliminate or to avoid other, and more intolerable, restraints or oppressive measures."

This way of putting the problems of power and freedom is, of course, not essentially a new one but it is, I think—provided one does not exclude the "single problem" approach—a valid one. It takes us back to value choices and re-emphasizes that there is a price tag attached to the enlargement of every particular freedom; that subjection to some restraints and possible "abuses" of power is always the cost for the removal of restraints in other areas. It stresses the limitations of merely mechanical schemes, to which, unfortunately, even socialists are often attached.

Of great importance to socialists is the stress placed on the mutual relations of "political" and "non-political" power; for a democratic system must be aware that both varieties will help shape the possibility of "freedoms" in particular areas. Indeed, it would seem that the distinctions we make between "political" and "non-political" power are often tenuous at best. Is a trade union operating under a "union-shop" con-

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tract within the confines of a complex labor relations law and under conditions of quasi-monopoly capitalism exercising "political" or "non-political" power when it threatens a member with expulsion? Under industrialism, whether "mature capitalist" or socialist, all major aspects of society tend to become politicized; and while from one point of view this may bring hope, from yet another it can only lead to dilemmas and often to despair.

Any discussion of power in an industrialized would-be democratic sosiety, moreover, will certainly raise for socialists the whole question of the relation between socialist values and technology. Too often in the past we have tended to accept a kind of "cultural lag" doctrine, which seemed to say that while society had been unable to control technology for democratic socialist ends in the past, in the future our methods of control would "catch up" with technological development. Like most non-socialists, we have frequently accepted increasingly complex technology as a given, to which we must somehow "adjust." We have sometimes minimized the inevitable costs, whether under capitalism or socialism, of technological growth.

Do we as socialists have answers to the problems of power which non-socialists do not possess? Ought we not to stress the notion that in a socialist society our scheme of values might lead us to limit or impair technological growth as well as, under certain circumstances, to encourage it? Ought we not recognize more frequently that socialist values could force us in some contingencies to sacrifice economic efficiency in behalf of what we deem higher social and political values?

It is questions of this order which the critical socialist will ask himself when confronted by the problems of power in a democratic society and by the inevitable value choices to which those problems give rise. The answers which the socialist of 1959 provides will not be nearly as clear-cut or certain as those which the traditional socialist, whether Marxist or non-Marxist, has often given; for in the very effort to implement primary socialist values, he may have to subordinate other values to which, traditionally, he has also been attached. And to differentiate between central and non-central values in the context of power relations is never an easy task—indeed, the pain considerably outweighs the pleasure.

MULFORD Q. SIBLEY

Desegregation and Southern Bigotry

DESEGREGATION: RESISTANCE AND READINESS, by Melvin Tumin. Princeton University Press, 1958. $5.00.

This book reports the results of an investigation conducted by Professor Melvin Tumin and his assistants into the attitudes of white people in Guilford County, North Carolina, toward the problem of desegregation. Tumin wanted to define which white elements in a Southern community would be

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"ready" for desegregation of the public schools and which would resist it to the bitter end. "Readiness," as he uses the term, is not necessarily willingness.

Tumin and his Princeton graduate students examined the attitudes of 287 white men of Guilford County towards the Negro and desegregation. Guilford County contains both rural and urban dwellers: farmers and factory workers, men in the professions and in business. The interview posed two general kinds of questions. The first was designed to find out how the white man *felt* about the Negro; the second explored what he might do to *act* on his feelings. That is, the first part was concerned with the white man's "image" of the Negro, his ideology and feelings. The second part involved social action.

Tumin found the white men to be more "segregationist" in their attitudes than in their public acts. A sizable majority of the citizens, for example, felt that the Negro was inferior to the white; but only about a fifth of these white men would take some form of action to prevent desegregation of the public schools. This twenty per cent became Tumin's "hard core" of resistors. Their proposed action varied from trying to amend the Constitution, to withholding state funds from the schools, to using force.

Tumin found another twenty per cent to be "ready" for desegregation. Some of those who were ready, but by no means a majority, had worked for the enactment of the Supreme Court decision. For the most part, these people were among the better paid and better educated elements of society. They had been exposed to more of the "informative" mass media (newspapers, news magazines, radio and TV news commentators). The hard core, on the other hand, had little socio-economic status, fewer years of education and little or no exposure to the mass media. Religion, as measured by church attendance, played no determinate role either for or against desegregationist attitudes.

These findings are all to be expected, but what is significant is that the *majority* of the white citizens fall somewhere in the middle. They are committed to Southern white ideology, but are not so committed to Southern white action. They can be swayed either to act in resistance to desegregation or, more likely, to comply passively to the desegregation of the schools when it occurs. The role of leadership thus remains crucial, as events in Little Rock have proved.

Tumin's analysis can now be applied to Virginia. In the fall of 1958, Governor Almond advocated "massive resistance" to desegregation—and the schools were closed down. Actually, however, there was no such thing as massive resistance. Pressure was put on Almond by two active minorities, one resembling Tumin's "hard core" and another his group of the "ready." In the end Almond complied with the latter group and a few schools were opened on a desegregated basis. And when Almond "complied," his white constituency followed him.

The experience in Virginia would thus seem to bear out Tumin's analysis. By remaining passive, the majority of white citizens go along with whatever their leaders decide and will "change" when he changes.

AN IMPORTANT SECTION of Tumin's book, therefore, was concerned with the leaders of Guilford County. Of the 23 leaders studied, Tumin found

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fourteen to be desegregationist. Twenty-two of the 23 had some college background, so that education, at least in the case of leadership, is not a decisive factor in forming attitudes *pro* or *contra* desegregation. It merely shows that education is a valuable asset if one wants to be a leader in American society.

Tumin's study of the leaders yields two significant findings. First, all of them felt that desegregation of the public schools in their community was inevitable. Representatives of both camps estimated that this would happen in one year; the maximum estimate was ten years. Furthermore, and this is one of the few notes of optimism in Tumin's research: "The open posing of disagreements, i.e., the bringing of conflict into the open, is positively functional for the side desiring social change and disfunctional for the side seeking to preserve the traditional way of life."

Once leaders grant the inevitability of social change, then public debate will work in the direction of that social change. Eight of the desegregationists claimed to have spoken out in favor of desegregation. By contrast, only three of the nine segregationists had defended their views in public. Tumin states that it is possible for a desegregationist leader, if his position is already secure, to speak on behalf of the Supreme Court ruling and not jeopardize his leadership.

Desegregation, by its very nature, is a limited program of social change, but it does represent a breakthrough that bears possibilities for future changes. In a desegregated society, racial prejudice tends to become a much more private affair, perhaps accompanied by guilt and anxiety. Prejudice goes on the defensive. When desegregation comes to the schools of the South, Southern ideologies will no doubt persist, but they will not be able to flourish as openly and with the earlier sanctions. Ideologies die slow, painful deaths, but they die faster if they are torn from their juridical and institutional settings. The desegregated classroom can mean the beginning of the end of Southern bigotry. JONATHAN SCHWARTZ

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employ 1 union stage-hand at $137 a week, 1 union press-agent at $145, 1 union scene-designer at $40 per day (for at least 3 days); and whenever there is to be a little live music, there must be union musicians at similar figures. All this amounts to a financial burden out of all proportion to the company's other expenses, and to the profits they expect or even hope for; it is quite unfeasible. (The theater has less than 175 seats; some are kept at $1, so students can come; figure it out.) In the case here, the burden happens to be particularly galling because the director himself is a gifted and well-known scenic-designer; like all other artistic groups, they prefer to couch their press-releases and other public relations in their own style; the work done by stage-hands is what almost everybody connected with a little theater is skilled at and does with pleasure; and everywhere in integral theater there is a need for live music, it can never be omitted, and canned music is deathly.

The unions are inflexible in their demands; the company cannot fulfill them. In this impasse there is at once generated enormous heat and idiotic remarks. "If you don't have the money, stay out of the theater!" says a distinguished functionary of one of the unions; "you're a painter," he says to the director, "why don't you stick to pictures?" On the other side, the Equity actors connected with the company are in a rage and about to tear up their cards. Those who are politically hep point out that organized labor has fallen into the hands of racketeers. And the paranoid demonstrate that there is a conspiracy among the unions, the critics, and the owners of theater real-estate, to prevent anything new and better from happening.

Necessity of the Unions

Let me insist that the principle of total theater unionism, including Equity, seems to me to be correct. This is simply because of the nature of the theater arts and crafts. Our city abounds in people of artistic talent, eager to exercise their separate talents. By disposition such people are free-lances; and the state of serious art in our society is such that, until they make a lot of money, free artists have little status or security and cannot easily maintain their rights and dignity. As a group, then, they are peculiarly subject to be taken advantage of and exploited by producers who can give them any work at all; and when taken advantage of, they act effectually as scabs and lower the standards of honest employment. That is, it is precisely the intrinsic virtues of the talented, their hunger to work and their solitariness, that make them socially weak and liable to lower social standards. Poor gifted musicians, painters, poets, dancers, and actors are severally weak indeed; by insisting, even inflexibly and intransigently, on their union, one can give them collectively some strength.

What then? The principle of unionism lays an unbearable burden on any new non-commercial company; it works to the disadvantage of Equity actors; and yet the principle itself is a necessary one. Nevertheless, dispassionately considered, the solution of this dilemma is easy. Briefly, if we carefully consider the nature of theater, we shall see that new theater in general *cannot* make money and must overcome great obstacles in order to exist; and yet eventually it must in turn become immensely popular and make a lot of money, becoming the exciting novelty in commercial theater. The process has two steps, and mindful of their own interests the unions must have a dual attitude: positively to foster the new and non-commercial, and to protect their standards in the commercial; and there ought to be a definite rule to mark the passage from the first stage of the process to the second. There is no doubt that it is a vague or clear understanding of this that, in part, has led Equity to its own more flexible policy.

The Nature of New Theater

Reflect a moment on the following commonplace observations:

(1) The theater is a fine art for an immediate present public; and it is also a collaboration of many skills. Therefore, theater requires a large social ef-

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fort, setting many people in motion, and a certain amount of social capital. (Not necessarily a large capital, compared, say, with architecture, where the very medium is expensive; but an even larger social effort than architecture.)

(2) Radically new theater, like any new art, cannot expect a mass-popular response, for it presents what is unfamiliar and is even actively resisted as meaningless, perverse, or dangerous. The sign of successful new theater is that the audience is torn between fascination and the impulse to walk out in disgust. The anxiety of new theater is greater than with other new art because theater demands a response in public, and its medium is exceptionally close to the animal and social behavior of life. The same anxiety, by the way, is felt even more by the players than by public, as any one who has rehearsed new theater with conventional actors can testify. Therefore, it is *only* from small intensely personally involved groups, and a small public of the like-minded, that we can expect new theater to emerge.

(3) But conversely, once a new theatrical advance has been made, it is likely to become immensely popular, for it is shared excitement. A new advance in some other art need not become popular in this way, for, although humanly important, it may be specialist and learned; but theater art is common and simple.

(4) So-called "little theater" groups, making a great social effort and overcoming great obstacles, from real-estate to interpersonal relations, and with little income to ease the path, are driven by an artistic fatality into the daring and the radically new. They are not dilettantes or amateurs; their aim is to achieve at least the excitement of the big professional entertainment—otherwise, why bother; yet their means are limited. Therefore they explore new ways of handling limited means, to get as much meaning as if they had extensive means; this creates startling effects. Or alternately they make daring simplifications, and this creates startling effects.

Let me sum up these familiar propositions in a formula: The task of new theater is to find out and invent what must be unpopular and yet will soon be immensely popular; it is in this thorny task that it makes a great social effort against many obstacles. Naturally people are not too attracted by this prospect. Like most of the "off-Broadway" theater at present, people prefer the easier task of performing modern classics (the new theater of one or two generations ago); of importing European succesess that are exotically safe; or of giving museum-like revivals, more properly the function of university players and dedicated amateurs. All that is off-Broadway and fairly non-commercial, but it is not new theater. (I do not mean, by the way, that the company I am discussing is a pure model of new theater, but it is one of the best of a bad lot, and nothing is perfect here below.)

A Proposal to the Unions

Bearing all this in mind, would not the wise, the statesmanlike, attitude of the unions be for them to say something like this: "New theater! go to it and we hope you succeed. For if you do, there will be a new kind of immensely popular and paying theater; and if you don't, there will be only a dying theater. The policy of Equity, distinguishing a commercial and a non-commercial theater, is a sound one; but we, of course, are in a different situation from the actors: for our carpenters, electricians, press-agents, musicians, and so forth, there is no psychological necessity to perform in theaters; unemployed in the theater, they could get other jobs; and we see no reason, therefore, to lower their standards in any way. But as for the actors, directors, and creative artists of scene, word, movement and music, who need the theater-public to exercise their talents, we shall not stand in their way. On the other hand, as soon as you free artists begin to get into the money, then the situation is entirely different, and we have a right to take our place in the enterprise and exact our fair shares. We have the right because all wealth is social wealth, produced by society as a whole, and it must be apportioned according to the rules that society has come to at the present time, to achieve which we in labor have fought and suffered much. Therefore we shall, by some reasonable

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rule of thumb, set a figure, perhaps an income-figure, perhaps a profit-ratio, at which we think your free art has entered the cash-nexus, a dividing line, at which the excitingly unpopular is beginning to be the immensely popular; and when any of your enterprises crosses that line, it must be total union. We reserve the right to examine your qualifications and check your books, and so you affiliate with us as your friends and pay a nominal dues."

This, I submit, is the wise, the statesmanlike, attitude that loses nothing for the unions, and that encourages the growth of theater. It can set a definite rule that fits the real nature of the case, unlike the present abstract "policy" or alternative non-policy of making "exceptions"; of sometimes being intransigent and sometimes shutting the eyes; of acting *de facto* as powerful critics and censors far beyond their competence. Instead, it gives the theater-crafts a noble and protective role in the growth of the culture of the people.

A New Responsibility

I said at the outset that this small question contains a great question; without further ado, let me generalize. The case is with us in America that, by and large, vast organizations, of state, capital, production, labor, communications, education, urbanism, etc., etc. have pre-empted the means of life. This is currently inevitable and doubtless in many ways desirable, though not so unquestionably desirable as most people think. (When *everything* is done according to a certain pattern, it is hard to imagine how some other pattern could work at all.) At the same time, it is resulting in a conformity that is by now inane and boring and will soon be dangerous, for nothing revitalizing can occur in an organizational plan and when something occurs outside the plan, it may not have space to grow. All this has become a familiar complaint.

I want to suggest simply that with their power, these organizations have acquired a new, strange, and troublesome responsibility: to limit the exercise of their power more intelligently than they are accustomed to, to stand out of the way in order that there can be a future also for themselves.

A group of trade unionists in the New York area came together two years ago to discuss some of the problems facing the labor movement. From different AFL-CIO unions and holding a variety of views, we had one thing in common: the desire to see a strong, free, democratic and honest trade union movement. Believing there was a real need for a place to discuss these issues we organized the New York Trade Union Forum, with the understanding that it was open to all within the labor movement—excluding only racketeers and Communists. We have had several meetings, all of them successful. Among the speakers have been Murray Kempton, Ed Gray, Herb Hill, Victor Reisel, Manny Muravchik, Samuel H. Friedman, Julius Manson, Ernest Fleischman, Eugene Victor, Joel Jacobson and many others.

Honorary Chairmen of the Trade Union Forum are A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Norman Thomas and Martin Gerber, Regional Director of the UAW.

We recently conducted a successful week end seminar where organizations such as the Workers Defense League, American Civil Liberties Union and the Association for Catholic Trade Unionists were represented. Among those who participated were Joel Jacobson, Robert Moser, Carl Rachlin, Allen Reitman, Max Shachtman, Jack Sessions, Bernard Rifkin and Al Nash. We extend to you a cordial invitation to become a participant of the Forum and to receive announcements of our discussions. Just send us your name and address.

To: The New York Trade Union Forum
Room 415, 101 West 30th St.
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LETTERS

Congratulations!

The editors of DISSENT join with his comrades and friends in sending congratulations to Norman Thomas on his 75th birthday. Perhaps more than any other American of our time, he has represented the claims of social justice and humane conscience. Wherever, during the past five decades, there has been a need for a voice to defend intellectual and civil liberties, a leader to risk himself in behalf of the oppressed and deprived, Norman Thomas offered his talent, his time, his whole life. American socialism, through all its vicissitudes, found in him a tribune, a thinker, an embodiment.

We of DISSENT can offer our testimony that even before he became a Contributing Editor he helped us in many ways, large and small, intellectual and practical. We know that much the same could be said of other, larger, more important projects. His energy, buoyancy, kindness and alertness have helped us, as they have helped others.

MILLS VS. HOWE

Editors:

Commenting on C. W. Mills' "Causes of World War III" in the Spring DISSENT, Irving Howe charges Mills with "a relentless thrust of assertion" and "analytic carelessness and moral disequilibrium." It seems to me that in this review it is Howe rather than Mills who is guilty of these qualities.

Howe says that Mills underrates "the role of Communist ideology." I should say that Howe vastly underrates the role of anti-Communist ideology in our society. Howe says that Mills "minimizes the differences in nature and quality between the Western World and the Communist countries." But Howe, by using the term "Western World," appears to ignore the differences in nature and quality of the various societies and political systems within the nations which are so loosely called the "Western World." Howe further compounds this confusion by shifting, in the same paragraph, from "the Western World" to "America, a democratic country" with the implication that the democratic qualities inherent in our own traditions are similarly inherent throughout the "Western World." Surely this is "analytic carelessness" of a high order.

Howe says that "There is a crucial difference between America, a democratic country that shows some signs of drifting toward authoritarianism and Russia, which for decades has been something considerably worse." Doesn't this comment miss the point, which is surely the *direction* of the trend of development? Since Russian society has traditionally been authoritarian, any *trend* toward a lessening of totalitarian controls could be considered as progress; whereas in our own country, since our *tradition* has been democratic, any trend in the direction of totalitarian controls is retrogressive. Those concerned with the problem of how to protect and advance democratic and humanistic institutions and values must be more alarmed by the retrogressive direction of our own society than by the fact of the totalitarian nature of Russian society under Communism. Howe minimizes the trend toward totalitarianism in our country—"shows some signs of drifting toward authoritarianism," is the way he phrases it. But this seems startling "analytic carelessness" since even our

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President in a press conference said that if our current trend continues we would become a "garrison state."

Howe is disturbed by Mills' statement that the enemy is WAR. Howe says that "the only realistic military (and political) view is that both the Russian regime and war are enemies, and that ways should be found to limit the power of the first while preventing the outbreak of the second." This is the position advanced by official spokesmen in the Pentagon, the State Department, the VOA etc., and repeated endlessly by our syndicated columnists and editorial writers for the popular press. It is called "Peace Through Strength," the "deterrent" of "massive retaliation" and so on. As policy it has admittedly brought the world to the brink of nuclear war repeatedly. A reader of a magazine called "DISSENT" might expect to find such simplistic notions dealt with critically, rather than accepted. Surely the ENEMY is totalitarianism (not just COMMUNIST totalitarianism) and its development here is fostered by our government's preparations for war.

Howe charges that Mills makes "excuses" for Soviet policy and to illustrate this charge Howe quotes a brief paragraph on Hungary in which Mills suggested that the problem of Hungary was complex and political, and possibly not unrelated to U.S. "Peace Through Strength" maneuvers. Howe's response to this is a "relentless thrust of assertion." Rebuking Mills, Howe says that: "The truth is that Khrushchev and Mikoyan suppressed the Hungarian revolution because they feared the spread of freedom to other satellite countries and to their own borders. That this central fact of our time . . ."

In other words, Howe accepts certain assumptions about the motives of the Soviet leaders and then he equates his own beliefs with TRUTH and FACTS. This seems to me to turn politics into theology. International affairs today involve moves and countermoves of enormous complexity, and the task of the political analyst must be to broaden the scope of inquiry rather than to shut off discussion with a simple "I believe therefore it is." One expects this sort of simplicity in a *Life* editorial but not DISSENT.

Mills is one of the few professional social scientists who has had the energy and courage to tackle head on the major issues of today in terms of our own trends, and to note not the "drift" but the purposeful rush toward totalitarianism and militarism in our own society. When the conservative President of our country can warn that we are heading toward a "garrison state" it seems odd to find "radical intellectuals" condoning this trend as a minor, virtually irrelevant peccadillo. Or not even noting it! Americans today do not need DISSENT to explain that "Khrushchev and Mikoyan have committed many evil acts that to put it mildly, do call other characters into question." Innumerable official and unofficial spokesmen—including VP Nixon, David Lawrence, the DAR, Max Lerner and so on and so on—report this incessantly. What IS needed is some tough-minded analysis of the totalitarian trends in our own society; and some analysis of our own government's share in creating the current danger of nuclear war. And suggestions for constructive alternatives!

Mills is trying to perform these services. Howe says of Mills' suggestions that "his book is guilty of a high-handed carelessness as to the possible consequences of their adoption." It is admitted by virtually every political and military analyst today that the PROBABLE consequence of the continued arms race and the continued "West-East" power struggle will be global nuclear war with possible extinction of civilization—and perhaps mankind. This is the issue American radical intellectuals should be dealing with. And such analysis must focus on our own, rather than Soviet, attitudes, policies and trends. Here is a field for the "serious and sustained discussion" which Howe rightly calls for.

May 1, 1959 HELEN MEARS

IRVING HOWE *replies:*

When it will be possible for Helen Mears, or some equivalent of her, to write a letter denouncing the Khrushchev regime with the violence that she denounces the Eisenhower regime and then print it in a freely-circulating socialist publication in Russia as opposed to the *status quo* there as DISSENT is to

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the *status quo* here, then I'll be prepared to take her views seriously. Not before.

[Other letters on the Mills-Howe exchange have been received, and as many as we have room for will appear in the next issue.—Ed.]

Changes in Communist World

Editors:

It is well to stress, as Mr. Fejto does in the Winter 1959 DISSENT, that the Communist system is far from being as monolithic as it sometimes appears from the outside, and that there are potentialities and actualities of conflict and evolution. What he fails to consider sufficiently, however, is precisely the focal point of Djilas' oversimplified but valid argument: that this "democratization" has limits beyond which it cannot go because then it would call into question the very roots of the system, roots which do not lie in any ideology, but in the power monopoly of the "New Class." The leash may be longer or shorter at different moments, but there *is* a leash, and it is held with a firm grip, even if this grip had to become more flexible since Stalin's death.

It is this fact of the ultimate monopoly of power which gives us the key to understand the varying degrees of "democratization," or lack of it, in the different areas under Communist control. It explains the surprising amount of intellectual freedom in Poland (and the attempts to confine it to the private sphere); Tito's tolerance of a Dedijer and persecution of a Djilas; the tight yet undisputed rule of an Ulbricht, the most despicable and most despised of all Communist politicians; the blooming and the wilting of the "Hundred Flowers"; and the bloody repression of the Hungarian revolt the minute it began to undercut the power monopoly of the Party and the Russian overlordship.

Undoubtedly, within this power structure there are and there always have been internal conflicts, and since Stalin's death these conflicts have had more play and more open expression. They have been most obvious in the economy and among the intelligentsia. In the economic field, wrong theories and badly conceived measures came up most directly and most visibly against harsh facts; and the creative writer, artist or philosopher, in his urge toward self-expression, comes forcibly into conflict with the pressures and narrow demands of the regime. By compromise, corruption and suppression the regime adapts itself to these stresses and conflicts. Through black and grey markets, corruption and decentralization, Russia's economy has tried to lubricate points of friction, and just now it is undergoing a veritable revolution in the discovery that capital investment is an economic rather than a political process, and has to be treated as such, with amortization and interest, to prove its worth in terms of its cost and productivity, as in any capitalist country. In the field of the intellect, the ups and downs in the "Thaw" have by now become a routine spectacle to be watched like the barometric pressure for indications of the "prevailing winds."

By focusing on these conflicts and stresses, and their expressions in print, we may be tempted to overestimate the potentialities of change. There have indeed been surprising evolutions—and Fejto is right in mentioning a Djilas or an Imre Nagy as prize examples. But it would be an impermissible jump to conclude from the actual or potential evolution of *individuals* to a similar potentiality for the *regime* itself. This would mean ignoring the limitations set by the monopoly of power. What the evolution of individuals under the impact of the inner stresses of the system may eventually lead to is a hollowing-out of the regime in such a way that, as the example of the Third Reich shows, in the end a thin shell of power conceals a complete "lack of faith." This is precisely why totalitarian regimes do not evolve, but collapse. For such a process to take shape, however, a great deal depends on the alternatives which the outside world has to offer, and on the extent and the form in which such alternatives make themselves known and felt behind the Curtain. And the first step toward influencing such an evolution from the outside is, of course, to recognize the nature both of its potentialities and of its limitations.

GEORGE ECKSTEIN

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Miscellany

THE SICKNESS OF SOUTH AFRICA

AT THIS WRITING thirty South African men and women are again on trial for their lives because they dared publicly oppose the Nationalist Government's harsh *apartheid* program of total segregation of the "Bantu" population (total except for daily work, for which Africans must travel miles into white areas). Sixty-one accused earlier still do not know whether the Government might re-indict them, having had two previous indictments quashed by the courts. Sixty-five others were dismissed over a year ago, after being held, without compensation, for a year and a half (since the first mass arrests in 1956) while thousands of documents were examined.

The releases, the indictments, the regroupings by the Government, have all seemed without rhyme or reason to those arrested; known Communists have been dismissed, respected leaders like Professor Z. K. Matthews were kept on. The Government now seems to be trying to prove that the present thirty were active advocates of "violent" overthrow of the state on the basis of statements to the effect that "freedom in our lifetime" shall be achieved. Over our dead bodies, the Government action implies; therefore violence must be intended.

Among those on trial are T. Tshume, young African volunteer worker for trade unions; C. Mayekiso, trade unionist who had campaigned for better wages and against rent increases; T. E. Tshunungwa, former president of African Teachers' Association; garment worker Mrs. Lillian Ngoyi; others who have been miners or factory workers until their arrest, as well as teachers, doctors, lawyers, and small businessmen. It is no secret that the race issue has also been an effective camouflage for the Government to implement its anti-union sentiments.

The whole story of the increasingly extreme racist measures of the Government, the stifling of opposition, the gestapo methods, the endless humiliations to Africans, Indians, and Coloreds, the hardships suffered by these defendants and their families during nearly 3 years of hearings, cannot even be suggested here. Nearly $300,000 has had to be spent for legal aid and family welfare, raised by Defense Funds in South Africa, England, and the United States, and administered by trustees Alan Paton, the Bishop of Johannesburg, and other liberal South Africans. The American Committee on Africa's Defense Fund has raised $50,000 for the defendants, and is seeking further funds for this and other urgent legal cases* which have arisen in South Africa, the Central African Federation, and Kenya, where police attacks and arrests of opposition leaders to white settler and colonial governments have made legal and welfare aid the main channel remaining for democratic support.

Since June 26 another method has been put into effect in South Africa: economic boycott. South Africans have been called on not to buy from merchants or manufacturers who support Verwoerd's Nationalist Government. Ghana and Jamaica are cooperating, as well as sympathizers in England. The Kenya Federation of Labor has called on all African workers throughout East Africa to support the boycott. South African rock lobster is about the only product Americans are likely to notice on the market here; gold, diamonds, uranium and other "vital" products constituting the bulk of American purchase, are more difficult for American consumers and workers to refuse to get their hands on. It is perhaps too early to see the effects of the boycott on South Africa, but the Minister of External Affairs, apparently fearful of its spreading, has warned that the African workers will be the first to suffer. Many are evidently willing to risk it—they have little to lose, and human dignity to gain.

A. M.

* Write to American Committee on Africa at 801 Second Avenue, New York 17.

Toledo Readers

DISSENT readers in Toledo and the area around who are interested in joining the Cooperative Commonwealth Forum are urged to contact: Dan Thomas, 616 Bowman, Toledo 9, Ohio Tel.: CH 8-2845)

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Among Our Contributors . . . Frank Marquart has worked in labor education for many years, conducting programs for large UAW locals, teaching classes, preparing materials for university labor and industrial relations institutes. He has written on labor subjects for "Politics," the "New Leader" and DISSENT . . . Harvey Swados' new novel, "False Coin," will be published in January . . . Everett M. Kassalow is Director of Research, Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO. He has contributed chapters to many books on labor issues and is currently also director of a special Research Seminar on Cooperative Labor Movements, Washington, D.C., 1959-1961 . . . Dan Wakefield is the author of "Island in the City," a book about Spanish Harlem . . . Daniel Bell joins the faculty of Columbia University's Sociology Department as associate professor this fall; a collection of his political essays, "The End of Ideology," will soon be published by The Free Press . . . David Carper was a fringe functionary in and around the labor movement for many years. Now in semi-retirement, he continues to associate with pork-choppers, chiefly with his shoes off in hotel rooms during conventions . . . Sidney Lens is a union organizer and frequent writer on labor and political subjects. His most recent book is "The Crisis in the Labor Movement" . . . B. J. Widick works in an auto plant. He co-authored "The UAW and Walter Reuther" with Irving Howe, and has contributed articles to the "Nation" and other magazines . . . Paul Goodman's most recent book, "The Empire City," has been accorded recognition as a major novel; his "Cave of Machpelah" was recently produced off-Broadway . . . Hugh Cleland teaches in Pittsburgh and has written frequently for socialist publications, especially on coal and steel . . . Paul Jacobs is staff director of the Fund for the Republic's Trade Union Project, staff writer for **"The Reporter,"** and a former union official.

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